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THIRTEEN SERMONS

FROM THE

QUARESIMALE OF P. PAOLO SEGNERI

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN

BY

JAMES FORD, A.M.

Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral.

THIRD AND CONCLUDING SERIES.

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SERMON XXVI.

ON RECONCILING OUR MINDS TO THE THOUGHT OF DEATH.

S. Luke vii. 12.

"Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother."

1. No affection of the mind usually renders a man, in my opinion, more extremely superstitious in his conduct, more irresolute, more incapable, and, if you will, more ridiculous, than the over-fear of Death. Hence you may notice certain persons, who, though invited to hear the preaching of a Chrysologus or a Chrysostom, brought back from their graves to address them—not to speak of any poor preacher like myself—would on no account go with the crowd to Church on this particular day. Only then fancy whether these same persons would ever keep in their possession any little memento or representation whatever of death; or whether they would ever introduce the subject, by way of serious conversation, in their families. They would forthwith take alarm at that disastrous omen of Philip of Macedon, who, having the night before asserted in some society that, of all kinds of death, a sudden death was the most desirable, proved the very next morning the truth of what he said, just as if, following up his own opinion, he had chosen it for himself. Why speak to such people about making their wills? They would suppose, that, this being once done, nothing on earth now remained for them, but that they had best get out of the world with the utmost expedition, as persons become quite useless and no longer

wanted. They also, after the example of the heathen, have their unlucky days; and who would ever induce them on any one of those days to commence a distant journey? So entirely would they give themselves up for dead men, that not even the prospect of acquiring a Kingdom would reconcile them to leaving their homes. What shall the sumptuous banquet profit them and the richly loaded table? Should they chance to espy that the number of the seats was, according to their creed, one to be considered fatal, never would they be prevailed upon to sit down there, through all eternity, though dying of hunger. Happy astrologers! What a fine price will these people give you in exchange for your trumpery! They contrive by all means in their power to ascertain the secret of their nativity; that so they may know the special danger they have to avoid, whether from the sword, from the fire, from the water, or from the precipice; and they will almost go so far, as to imitate that Artemon of old, who invariably made two of his servants carry a target over his head, from the apprehension he had of what might come tumbling upon him. To such palpable acts of folly are men not unfrequently driven by their extravagant fears of death.

Still, my brethren, I must plainly tell you, that, were such cases to be found only in the ranks of the wicked, the self-willed, and head-strong, it would not surprise me. These wretched beings have indeed much cause to shudder at the thought of their last exit, which must be their awful passage to Hell. But that the same thing should be found among persons on the whole religiously inclined, and in their principles and mode of life rather strict and devout than otherwise, this does really fill me with astonishment. And how does it strike you, my Christian hearers? Is it then so miserable a thing to die, that, because you saw this morning a *dead man carried out* to his burial, you are all ready to hasten far away from the affecting scene? Ah! no; I beseech you, stop; for my mind has been stirred up to venture for your sakes on a noble enterprise. I would fain attempt to deliver you in some measure from the bondage of that fear, which is a most serious obstacle to your ever applying your mind in good earnest to the consideration of your latter end.

Nor, unless I mistake, will my task be difficult. We observe how little children, when by some accident they see a mask at a distance, are thrown into such a panic of fear, that they immediately rush with cries to their mothers' arms to hide themselves. What then can we best do to compose them? Why, place in their own hands the mask itself, the mighty cause of their trepidation. For in this way they will not only soon cease to fear it, but will come and play and amuse themselves with it, talk to it, and feel much hurt, if you show the least wish to snatch it out of their hands. Now this is the very manner, in which, with your kind permission, I intend to deal with you on the present occasion. I wish just to make you with your own hands feel what, after all, this death really is, and to convince you by this process that you are not justified in so mightily fearing it, but ought rather gladly to entertain, if not even heartily to desire, its coming. One thing alone I must take for granted, as I hinted before; it is, that I am addressing persons actuated by some sense of true religion. Give me, therefore, your attention, and without further preface we will enter on our subject; proceeding, however, step by step, so as not to omit a single one of those motives, which, like an industrious bee, I have collected from the healthy stores of my religious reading, and with a view to my own edification, as well as to yours.

2. Who among you, my brethren, has ever had to travel in the winter along a road, narrow, precipitous, incommoded with stones, and surrounded with danger? You fall in with some countryman engaged there in repairing the hedges or feeding his flock. What is it you at once ask him? "Pray, is there any other road than this to the town?" If he informs you that there is another road, vastly superior, more safe, more convenient in every respect, how angry you are immediately with the guide, who to your immense annoyance took you the very worst way. But, should you come to find that his road was the public one and the only road, by which all travellers without exception must pass, then you shrug up your shoulders, and, however troublesome your journey may prove, you pursue it with a greater degree of patience and resignation. Now what, my hearers, is the inference I would

have you deduce from this? Here it is. When we come to die, if we had to traverse, not a beaten path, but an unfrequented and lonely one, there would be nothing strange under these circumstances in our complaining of the man, who guided us: but, since the road before us is one common to mankind in general, cheer up, I say, cheer up, my hearers: for we have no right to feel aggrieved that we, too, must travel over it, just like other people. *I go the way of all the earth,* (1 Kings ii. 2.) This was precisely the consoling thought, with which David fortified his mind, when he reached that formidable place of passage,—"I must take the main road." With this, Joshua; with this, Jacob; and with this, all good men have armed themselves, who, according to the expression of the most enlightened Idiota,[1] "had no fear of death." And why? "Because they considered that whatsoever must of necessity be done must be done by us cheerfully." And really our presumption must not be inconsiderable, if we take it ill of death that he has not spared *us,* when he refused to spare the Abrahams, so eminent for their piety; the Josephs, so renowned for their chastity; the Solomons, so famous for their wisdom; the Rachels, so attractive for their beauty; the Judiths, so intrepid for their valour. These magnanimous souls, worthy for the good of the community to have abided for ever in this world, are nevertheless all gone: and shall our going seem to us something so intolerable—we perhaps being, as S. Jude wrote, *trees without fruit* upon the earth, more likely to disgrace than to honour it, more likely to prove its incumbrance than its gain?

3. It is quite useless for you to tell me, as the common

[1] In the catalogue of the Bodleian Library this singular name *Idiota* occurs: it is assigned to "Raymond Jordan," or probably, "Jourdain," if French: "Giordano," if Italian. It may be questioned, why did he assume the name of Idiota? was it meant as a pseudonom? or was it used as an appellative merely, with a modest self-description, and perhaps a reference intended to Acts iv. 13? Since writing the above, the Translator has found a satisfactory account of Idiota in Dr. Cave's Chartophylax Ecclesiasticus. He was Raymondus Jordainus, Abbas Cellensis, in France in 1381, and the author of "Religious Contemplations" on various subjects, which were all collected and published at Paris in 1654, by Th. Raynaud. *Idiota* was a fictitious name. "*Diu suppresso suo sub Idiotæ nomine latuit, et Sæculi octavi aut noni antiquitatem præ se tulit.*"

talk goes, that you are not so much grieved at having to die, as at your being obliged, in the present state of things, to die so soon; and that you think it hard we should not still, while here, enjoy the longevity of those Noahs, of those Arphaxads, of those Nachors, of those Methuselahs, of those Terahs, every one of whom was privileged to share in the festive doings of more than a single century. Oh, what paltry regrets! Oh, what low-minded wishes! You have only to advance a step further, and, in imitation of old Theophrastus mentioned by Tully, vehemently to express your envy of the stags, or the ravens, or the crows, whom nature has indulged with a longer period of life, than she has granted to her favourite race of mankind. And what is the mighty happiness to be enjoyed here below, that renders a long life so very desirable?

We read of the Israelites that they spent their days in Egypt under severer hardships, than perhaps ever fell to the lot of any other people. Had in suspicion of the princes, in hatred of the Rulers, in neglect of the nation at large, they were sunk into the lowest slough of infamy and of decay. Sentenced to never-ending hard labour, here they were dispersed to gather straw, here to cut down trees, here to cart away sand, here to heat furnaces, here to convey blocks of stone; and, in return for all this, their only wages was to be beaten. Continually bastinadoed, and without any fault of theirs, they could not demand justice, unless at the risk of being assailed, as a substitute for it, with bitter scoffs and contemptuous invectives. More than this: the most active measures were taken to exterminate them altogether; and, just as if to have children born to them was a tremendous crime, all their little ones were condemned to the waters of the Nile, or to the teeth of the crocodile. On what account did the Almighty suffer these Hebrews, a people, whom He so much loved and valued, ever to come into Egypt to endure such vile treatment as this? S. Chrysostom shrewdly supplies the answer. God suffered this, in order to prevent the Hebrews from becoming too fond of Egypt, and to incline them rather to dislike and detest it; so that they might be more willing to leave it, when He should afterwards call them

to the land of promise. In order to make them hate Egypt, "He suffered them to endure hardships in works of brick, and clay, and all sorts of rubbish."

Now God employs a similar device, in order to wean our affections from this mortal life. He has ordained it to be a life of toil and trouble, of hardship and distress; now oppressed with terrible ailments, now disquieted with inconsolable sorrows, always liable to be molested with a thousand inroads of strange vicissitudes and reverses. He has, moreover, so willed it, that the further we advance in years the more we become subject to afflictions and to necessities; so that it may pain us the less to leave the world. *Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest.* So by the mouth of Micah (ii. 10,) would the Lord seem to give us an answer. *Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest.* And yet we poor creatures can never make up our minds to say, "Let us depart;" but no sooner do we discern the least symptoms of the migration we are taught to expect, than our minds become agitated, the blood runs cold in our veins, and our spirits quite die away within us. We would fain, even in old age, obtain from heaven the reprieve of a single additional year. And do we not, beyond all doubt, hereby incur that severe reproof, addressed by God to the wretched Ephraim, whom He called a foolish dove, a dove without sense or reason? *Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart* (Hos. vii. 11.) But what, you will ask, is the particular silliness exemplified by the dove? Shall I tell you? The love the poor creature has for its tower. For, in spite of all the ill usage it is receiving from day to day, the plunder of its young ones, the slaughter of its companions, the robbery of its eggs, the foolish creature still perseveres in going back and rebuilding its nest. The like to this is seen among ourselves. We are constantly witnessing the failure of our worldly projects. We are persecuted by men in power, we are supplanted by rivals. The very things, of all others, the most dear to us, are snatched away; and yet we go on still loving our treacherous dove-cote; we go on still clinging tenderly to our darling nest; and we are still proposing to take up our delectable and happy abode in it, just as if there was no dwelling-place in store for us

beyond, one, as vastly superior to our present home, as a Royal palace is to the nest of a dove.

4. But even suppose the entertainment we get in this life were most commodious and most hospitable, can we tell, on the other hand, whether our dying at a later period would prove more to our spiritual advantage than our dying sooner? Historians have affirmed, in the case of Pompey the Great, that nothing was wanting, in order to his being the most successful and glorious man in all the world, but his dying ten years earlier. It was a like mischance, that prevented Nero from being one of the most renowned for clemency, and Galba from being one of the most looked up to for administrative powers. Whereas what was the happier destiny of an Alexander? Was it, that he vanquished Darius? that he overcame Porus? that he dictated laws to the Indians? Not so: it was, that he died so young. Had he only survived a little longer, it is thought unquestionable, that, as the West was now arming in opposition against him, he would have forfeited his splendid title of "the Great." Just so, as in these cases, Oh, had numbers died but a single year sooner, they would now be ranked among the most distinguished and most eminent Saints in Paradise, whereas, in consequence of their life having been prolonged, they have to groan in the Hell of the finally condemned!

Why then should we fear even a premature death, when this very circumstance may be the means of our Salvation? I observe that, on your foreseeing the approach of the hurricane ready to make an onslaught on your property, you do not delay a single moment to get your standing corn reaped, though it be not yet quite ripe for the harvest. You contrive to have the grapes cut, and the apples gathered, and the oranges stored, though they have not yet acquired their full golden hue, and therefore have not yet completed their proper time and season. And why then should we feel hurt, if God manifest towards us a like consideration and a like pity; such as each person will manifest towards his property to prevent its receiving damage? "His soul pleased the Lord" —mark, what the author of the Book of Wisdom states to be the special sign of a soul precious to God—"His soul

pleased the LORD." GOD cherished an exceeding love for that soul, placed, as it was, in a state of jeopardy. What then did He do? Why, He hastened to remove him out of the world; not in judgment, as it is with the votaries of sin, but in order to his salvation. "Therefore hasted He to take him away from among the wicked." (iv. 14.)

5. And only tell me, my hearers, in sober truth, what man among us, so long as he lives, is not constantly, whether he will or no, exposed to the most imminent danger of falling into sin, and thereby of ruining his soul? A certain philosopher of the name of Stesichorus was once asked what kind of vessel was the safest at sea; whether, for instance, a large ship, or a tartan, or a light galley, or any other sort of keel, that ploughs the main. With much shrewdness he instantly replied, that the safest vessel was the one, that was already hauled up on shore; intimating, that, to whatever class it might belong, there was no security for it, while out at sea. Now understand this, as exactly applying to every mortal man. While he is alive, which is tantamount to saying, so long as he is sailing over the tempestuous ocean of this world, he too is in the same continual danger of being shipwrecked. Unquestionably, therefore, our most earnest desire should be to get to shore with as little delay as possible. Oh, what whirlwinds, Oh, what hurricanes are about us, while we are tossing up and down over the yawning deep! "We have," as S. Cyprian represents our condition, "We have to contend against covetousness, against lewdness, against anger, against ambition, against the sins of the flesh, against the seductions of the world. If we overcome covetousness, lust rises up; if we subdue lust, ambition takes its place; if we triumph over ambition, anger inflames, pride puffs up, intemperance misleads, envy destroys peace, emulation separates friendship." And must we not add to this catalogue the attacks of those freebooters of Hell, who are perpetually giving us chase on this sea? The passage in the Vulgate, where Job speaks of human life, as being "a warfare" (vii. 1,) is more forcibly expressed in the Septuagint by "an incursion of rovers bent on plunder;" giving us to understand that, though we have so happily escaped the treacherous whirlpools, the sandy shoals,

the boisterous winds, the sunk rocks, and the tremendous monsters of the deep, we have still to beware of the clutches of these pirates. I have said enough. Come; we are now all agreed that, until we get into the harbour, there is no security for us; and therefore let us be ready with crowded sails to improve the prosperous gale, that drives us towards it. Nor let it be any grief to relinquish these dear bodies of ours. I have myself witnessed a ship's crew, whose only thought it was, when closely chased by an Algerine corsair, to save their lives. When once safe on shore, it mattered little to them that their felucca fell a prey to these barbarians, and that they actually saw them on the beach breaking it up in pieces with relentless violence or with outrageous insolence. Let whosoever will then take possession of our bodies: let him maul and disfigure them. What is this to us, so long as the soul, freighted with all its precious treasure, makes its way to a Heavenly rest in perfect security?

6. A Heavenly rest! Oh, in that case, you will say, we are quite of your opinion; we shall then be quite content to die. But who is there to certify us of this? What invests death with so much terror, is the misgiving we have of something worse after it; our knowing that death is to many a transition from temporal to everlasting sufferings. Hold; for I understand your meaning: but you interrupt me needlessly; for did I not tell you from the beginning, that this discourse was not intended for abandoned sinners, who wallowing in every kind of vice, impenitent and callous, seem purposely bent on doing all they can to involve their souls in perdition? We have nothing now to do with these unhappy souls. My arguments were not directed to them. I know too well the need they have, not merely to fear, but to shudder, but to stand aghast at the prospect of their final dissolution. I repeat it then. My sermon is for a class of persons, who are somewhat anxiously concerned about their salvation; for persons, who, if they fall, at once make an effort to rise, who, if they sin, immediately repent. This I suppose to be the general character of those present; and hence I make bold to declare unto you that, at the hour of your death, you should have a strong confidence in the most

precious Blood of Him, who glories in that most endearing name, *A refuge in due time of trouble* (Ps. ix. 9:) for never does He disappoint us in our need. To Him, every day you live, you should commend the great business of your final departure hence, earnestly and heartily addressing Him in those affecting words—*Be not a terror unto me. Thou art my hope in the day of evil* (Jer. xvii. 17;) or again, *Deliver me out of the hand of the wicked* (xv. 21;) or again, *Redeem me out of the hand of the terrible;* or again, *Cast me not away in the time of age: forsake me not, when my strength faileth me.* (Ps. lxxi. 8.)

But, further, if you desire to become possessed of an expeditious method, whereby death shall at once translate you to Heaven, I have it here at your service. Only practise the lesson I have this morning studied to impress upon your minds.—Bid death welcome; willingly embrace him. Who among you has not read in Holy Scripture of a certain Prophet, who when despatched, as on a commission requiring the utmost care, to the wicked Jeroboam, transgressed the Divine commandment, which had forbidden his accepting any offer of refreshment and hospitality on his journey, by whomsoever made? (1 Kings xiii.) For his act of disobedience he was certainly on his return home attacked by a furious lion, and was slain. But what then? Not only did the same lion abstain from any attempt to devour him or tear him in pieces, but he actually posted himself near to his carcase, to defend it from any other savage beast, until such time, as it was honourably committed to the grave. Now I put it to you—this Prophet was either a sinner? or, this Prophet was a Saint? If a Saint, how do you account for the lion's attacking him, when he was alive? if a sinner, how do you account for the lion's defending him, when he was dead? What I happened once to read in S. Gregory gives a most worthy solution of the difficulty. He says that the Prophet, at the time of his being attacked, was in fact a sinner—"He was in his life to be blamed:" but that, on his receiving death itself with a perfect readiness and resignation, as in judgment for disobedience, he became a Saint. "He was thus made righteous instantly by his death;" and accordingly,

as he was ill-treated at first, like any ordinary man, so he was honoured afterwards, as a man of GOD. "Therefore the lion, who before had destroyed the life of a sinner, now preserved the body of a righteous man."

Nor let this surprise you: for if, under any trial, however inconsiderable, resignation to the will of GOD is the best proof we can give of our love towards Him, how much more must this be the case, in regard to that special trial of our death, from which, beyond all others, we naturally shrink? Would you then feel certain of death's immediately translating you to all the bliss, I have described, learn to correct sense; undeceive it, get the mastery over it; and make a sacrifice of your self-will by cheerfully accepting death at whatever time it may please GOD to appoint it to you. Be assured that an act, such as this, will more conduce to your perfection, than any other act of your whole former life. Listen to the evidence given to you by S. Augustine; "There are some persons," he observes, "who profess themselves unwilling to die, from the wish to get more time in this life to grow in grace; when, after all, their growth consists in this very thing, that they should be found willing to die. Therefore"—ponder well these next words—"What they do not desire, in order that they may render themselves perfect, let them desire the same, and they are perfect at once." Let the man, who desires life with a view to obtain perfection, make up his mind willingly to die; and behold him perfect!

7. And may there not be numerous other motives, quite as encouraging and effectual in this matter, as those already suggested? To go back to the point whence we diverged; I would have you weigh well the vast consolation every good man has, when, by means of his death, he comes at last to have an infallible assurance that he is in a state of Grace. Oh, how great must be this joy! Oh, the rapture! Oh, the blessedness attending such a discovery, the like to which we never could have experienced all our life long! A lady, whom we will suppose to be supremely anxious about her personal display, would sooner lose any of the fine treasures of her toilet than she would her looking-glass. The loss of this would be to her something exceedingly distressing. And

why? Perhaps, because she derives from the looking-glass any beauty, or charm, or power of fascinating? Not at all; but because by using it she knows herself already to possess these. However fair, elegant, and in the fashion she is, still, without the distinct report and testimony of the dear looking-glass, her appearance does not satisfy her. She will have it to be the sole arbiter of her dress and comeliness. Upon its verdict she relies. With it she takes counsel, while she pays very little attention to what her maidens may affirm on the subject. Accordingly, until she have leisurely surveyed herself in the glass, she still doubts whether the ribbon has quite succeeded in preventing her flowing tresses from running wild: she is still subject to misgivings, lest her ringlets are not becomingly adjusted, whether her neck and her face have received their perfect cleanliness and lustre, whether there be not something still amiss in the arrangement of her jewels, and the disposition of the veil, with which she would fain seem to conceal her bosom.[1] To apply this. Do we not all know the intense anxiety, with which good men labour to be adorned with beauty, not as to their outward appearance, but their inward tempers of mind? To be lovely in the sight of God—this always is the fervent desire of pious souls. *I want nothing else,* so speak they in those beautiful words of Jacob; *I want nothing else, but only to find favour, my Lord, in thy sight.* (Gen. xxxiii. 15, Vulg.) It is for the sake of this that they so cheerfully perform the most painful duties of religion, and live a life of watchfulness and mortification. But all for what? They have no looking-glass in this world to assure them of the completion of their desires. It is quite

[1] Many passages occur in this translation, which do violence, more or less, to our tastes and opinions, especially in regard to the decorum and "the dignity of the pulpit." These however have been retained, when they involve no error, as presenting us with interesting notices of Italy, and Italians, and Italian preachers in the seventeenth Century. The illustration here employed was peculiarly adapted to the Italian *gusto*, and therefore most likely to fix itself on the attention and memory of the hearers, who would entertain none of those objections to it, which at once occur to our minds. The same may be said of what we read in other parts of the Quaresimale, but, above all, in the next Sermon (Sect. 1, 2,) where two passages of this character are retained for the reasons—good ones, it is hoped—above-mentioned.

true, there are persons at hand, who, prompted by compassion or in order to flatter them, are ready to tell them, as these maidens told their mistress, that they need no longer make themselves uneasy; because there is not a single spot or blemish left about them; that all their doings are commendable, all their looks modest, all their gestures becoming, and their whole behaviour quite consistent. But then the poor souls cannot derive comfort from any testimony of man: they have rather cause to fear, lest Isaiah should have had them in his view, when he delivered that warning, *O my people, they that call thee blessed the same deceive thee, and destroy the way of thy steps.* (Isa. iii. 12, Vulg.) Hence they begin with Job to suspect all their most ordinary actions—*I feared all my works.* (ix. 28, Vulg.) Hence they doubt with David of every lurking imposture—*Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults.* (Ps. xix. 13.) Hence they join Paul in his anxious avowal, *I know nothing by myself*—my own conscience does not accuse me—*yet am I not hereby justified.* (1 Cor. iv. 4.) Oh, who can describe the satisfaction in store for these righteous souls, when death will arrive and hold up before their eyes that bright undimmed looking-glass of GOD's particular judgment, and when, after they have seen their true condition, they will be authorised at once to pronounce—"I am clean!" Oh, the transports! the unspeakable ecstasy of delight—to know, for a certainty, that they are Beloved of GOD, that they are elected to Glory, that they are safe for ever!

8. I am aware that, in comparison of this, every other truth, with which they have enlarged their minds, will sink in their estimation. But then further consider what the effect on their souls will be, when (as though a covering were removed from before their eyes) in a moment of time they will behold objects far beyond all their past conceptions, so new, so marvellous, so diversified? I have commonly heard death described, as being a sleep; but, to speak the truth, it will rather be an awakening, a coming to the consciousness that hitherto we have been sleeping; *He shall be brought to the graves and shall watch in the heap of the dead.* (Job xxi. 32, Vulg.) Oh, thou world round about us! and what can we possibly know of thee during our sojourning here? We

raise our eyes to the stars; but who can tell us of what materials those beautiful luminaries are composed—what are the dimensions, what is the number, of the fixed stars? what are the influences, what is the order, of the planets? The Heavens —how many, and formed of what substance—perishable, or immortal? Who is it, that gilds the Sun? Who, that silvers the Moon? What Father was it, who begat the winds, that boisterous family? Who allows them liberty? Who places them under confinement? Who lashes them into fury? Who composes them to peace? Whence is it, that the clouds hang suspended in the air, in spite of that enormous burden of waters they contain? What fire is that, which causes in the lightning effects so prodigious? Who folds up the snow in such delicate white flakes? Who rolls the hail into such hard rounded morsels? What pencil imparted those lovely tints to the rainbow, the beautiful harbinger of peace? or, whence its varying beams of light? And, as to so many other miracles of nature, apply to them what I have said of these. Say it of the springs, that have their birth on the loftiest eminences; of the sea, that is restrained by the puniest sands; of the metals, that are formed within the bowels of the deep-sunk rocks; of the minerals, of the plants, of the medicinal herbs, of the savage beasts, of men, of devils, and of those spiritual intelligences so far removed from us. It is quite true that we profess some degree of knowledge concerning these things, as is testified by the Apostle; *Now we know in part.* (1 Cor. xiii. 9.) But this is the very trial appointed to us in this world, that we *know in part.* It were less pain to us to know nothing at all; but to know just enough to excite, but not enough to satisfy our desires, this is something to torment us. What therefore will our joy and rapture be, when, disencumbered of the mortal body, we shall open our eyes, clear our vision, behold every object, and in a moment of time find ourselves made perfect in all wisdom and science, so as far to surpass the most celebrated philosophers the world ever produced? How does this strike you? What have you now to say? Is it not in your opinion well worth dying, in order to obtain by dying such blessings as these?

Seneca gives us an account of a certain philosopher, Caius Junius by name; how that, when he received the sentence of death, he was quite transported with joy, because, as he said, he should very soon be satisfied in his mind, touching the mighty secret, then so much discussed in every academy; namely, the Immortality of the soul. A Homer died from sheer mortification at his not knowing how to solve an enigma, proposed to him by some poor fishermen. A Philetas died from mere regret at his not knowing how to unriddle a sophism, proposed to him by some would-be philosopher. And it is reported of an Aristotle, that, not knowing how to trace the cause of the currents in the Euripus, he desperately threw himself into its rapids, and cried out, "*Quoniam Aristoteles non capit Euripum, Euripus capiat Aristotelem.*" To such a degree has a single truth, when not understood, appeared in the minds of other men to be more intolerable than death. How then can this same death appear to us so great a hardship, when we shall be indebted to it for the clear discovery, not of one single truth, but of truths without number, all of them so unheard of, so sublime, so transcendent?

9. I am, however, far from proposing this consideration as your chief motive and inducement to shake off quickly the trammels of this life: no, Sirs; I wish your special motive to be a desire to see GOD. Ah, my dear Christians, who would believe it? A GOD on His throne of Glory is now waiting to unveil before us the beauty of His countenance, to admit us into a share of His happiness, to introduce us to the possession of His riches; and we, who have it in our power in a short time to secure all these blessings, yet still crave delay. Oh, our blindness! Oh, our infirmity! Oh, our meanness of spirit! Moses had a fervent longing desire to see the face of his LORD; and accordingly, the opportunity of a familiar intercourse being offered him, he summoned courage and with holy boldness and under strong emotion supplicated the LORD thus: *Shew me Thy face.* (Exod. xxxiii. 13.) And very soon, in my opinion, would he have obtained that exalted favour, but that, when he saw his petition was countersigned with that conditional clause, *No man shall see Me, and live,* the venerable man all of a sudden either took fright, or abated some-

what of his ardour, and felt no courage left him to persevere in his supplication. Holy Augustine, meditating on this incident, scarcely knew what to say; and, whether from a feeling of resentment or of bitter surprise at such a proof of lukewarmness, I know not, he could not help crying out: "Did it require so much to make him close with the condition, and to answer, 'Then I will die?' Shall man not see Me, and live? There is nothing so hard in this. Ah, LORD, let me die, that so I may see Thee. See Thee I will, that here I may die. Deal with me, as it pleaseth Thee, O LORD; but if, in order to seeing Thee, Thy only condition is, that I must die; I am quite willing to have it so. I close with the proposal. Little shall I feel the privation of no more beholding the Sun in these heavens. Fain would I close my eyes to every other perishable object of this life. Farewell, ye groves; farewell, ye gardens; farewell, ye mountains; farewell, ye seas! Is it such a mighty thing to sacrifice all desire to gaze any longer upon your attractions, if so be I may see Him, who gave you your being, who imparted to you your beauty? Oh, my GOD, Thee Thee only do I desire, and without Thee nothing. With Thee I wish to be present. To Thee I long to depart; and, if these mortal ties are the only impediments to my soaring above to Thy glory—why, then—what wait I for? I do not ask with the Apostle for the loosening of these ties—*I desire to be dissolved*—(Phil. i. 23, Vulg.) That takes too much time; let them be snapped asunder, or rather, for still hastier despatch, let them be cut and dissevered at a stroke. In my dying nothing can grieve me but the delay, Thou hast threatened in those words, *Thou shalt abide for me many days.* (Hos. iii. 3.)" In such terms did the ardent zeal of Augustine express itself, after by his own experience he knew somewhat the meaning of the expression, to "see the face of GOD." And what do we profess in regard to ourselves? Tell me, ye Christians, what have we to say? Are you quite indisposed to accept the same condition and to close with this proposal?

It is incredible, and yet it is quite true; so I will speak it out. People are to be found—it may be, some among ourselves—who, were GOD to give them their option, and allow

them, if so minded, still to continue in their present actual state of life, would be quite ready to forfeit Heaven for ever. And is not this a prodigy of blindness, or of unbelief? Oh, wretches that we are! What then should we do, supposing we were not His own dear *peculiar people* (Deut. xxvi. 18) received into His Church, nourished with His Blood, supported with His Life, honoured with so many tokens and earnests of His love, had our lot, on the contrary, been cast with theirs, who *have no hope* (1 Thess. iv. 13)? We have committed iniquity: 'tis most true: what then? Is not God most ready to absolve and to forgive us? Ah, be well assured that His glory is prepared for us, if we will only have it. "For we are the children of Saints, and look for that life, which God will give to those, that never change their faith from Him." (Tob. ii. 18, Vulg.) Be then of good cheer, my Christians! Was a man ever known to advance reluctantly to receive the garland after the wrestle, the prize after the race, the triumph after the battle? Are not we the people, who every day of our lives are praying so earnestly for the coming of a Heavenly kingdom; *Thy kingdom come?* How then can we be so enamoured of this earthly prison? The rivers, I observe, will allow themselves no rest, until such time, as they have plunged into the embraces of the ocean. However flowery the vales, through which they run, however rich the orchards, however delightful the gardens, no such attractions can for a moment arrest their progress. They seem, as they hasten onwards repeatedly to murmur, To the sea! to the sea! The winds are strangers to peace, until they have swept over the earth. The flames are strangers to repose, until they are re-united to the heavens. And shall we be slack, and speed with less impetus to our final union with God? Let it not be so, Christians. This morning we will decide the matter, as S. Cyprian did. And how? Why, "with a dauntless mind, with an unshaken faith, with a determined intrepidity," let us hold ourselves in readiness for whatsoever God wills; and, "discarding every fear of death," let us forward our soul's preparation for immortality. Let us approve ourselves to be such, as the Christians we boast ourselves to be; and, when the day of Christ's summons

shall dawn upon us, let us immediately respond to the call, and "thus depart out of this world, not as from constraint and necessity, but, of a willing mind." Far be it from us to rank with that class of pitiable beings, into whose ears the warning voice, the intimation of death drawing nigh, must be softly whispered, for fear of distressing them. Let our Christian friends and brethren be rather on the move, and near at hand to assist us with their prayers, and the Priests to fortify our souls with the Holy Sacrament. The sight of them will not alarm us.

Consider, my dear and tenderly beloved brethren, and bear it well in your minds, that already at Baptism you have renounced this evil world, and therefore, as the Apostle teaches, *we have here no abiding city, but we seek one to come.* (Heb. xiii. 14.) Let us joyfully entertain that messenger, who will graciously invite us to a more settled habitation, to that Kingdom, for which we were born, that Heaven, for which we were created. As long as we abide here, we are *absent from the Lord.* (2 Cor. v. 6.) Where is the exile, who is not in a breathless haste to reach his native land, who does not during his voyage long for favourable winds, unwearied oars, a quick passage? Our country is Paradise. Our fathers are those most holy Patriarchs, those Prophets, those Martyrs, those Apostles. How then is it possible we do not pant for a speedy admission into their presence? Oh, the many friends, that are there waiting and expecting our arrival, secure of their own immortality, only solicitous about ours? Quick then, quick: let us long for the earliest opportunity of enfolding them in our arms, of seeing them once more to our joy, of hearing them speak to us, of abiding with them in everlasting happiness. Blessed is Death, the only thing, that can induct us unto all this felicity! And Blessed he, who knows thee, who prizes thee, who desires thee! *Let rottenness enter my bones and swarm under me.* (Habac. iii. 16, Vulg.) Let my whole body be food for worms, and turn to dust and corruption; *that I might rest in the day of trouble;* that I may find on the day of my death, which is here called *the day of trouble,* the only true *rest—that I may go up to our people that are girded,* ascend to meet the *people* I so dearly love, who are yonder there, ready *girded* to receive me.

The Second Part.

10. It gives me pleasure to believe that the dreadful horror, which the mere mention of the word Death occasioned you, has by this sermon been somewhat abated in your minds. What is my next desire for you? In the first place, I would have you never absent yourself, as some do, from any spiritual exercises, where the subject of death is dwelt upon, under the idea of their being gloomy, and of disastrous omen. I would rather have you take delight in frequenting them, especially when you may thence learn how to render your death a happy event, as the method is taught in that well-known exercise, called "The Good Death." I would, as a part of the same duty, recommend you to cultivate for the future a closer familiarity with death, to form the habit of consulting it; in a word, that you would be advised by it in every important matter. I mean that, whenever you have to make up your mind in any affair of moment, you would pause and reflect, whether the course you decide upon would be likely to give you satisfaction on your death-bed: if so, do it; but, should it appear otherwise, do it not. "Do nothing," it is written, "without advice, and, when thou hast once done, repent not." (Ecclus. xxxii. 19.) But how in all the world can we ever find a thoroughly trustworthy adviser continually at our elbows? Here he is, here he is—advise with death. "O death, thy sentence is good!" (xli. 3, Vulg.) declares the son of Sirach. None can pass a better judgment than death; a judgment more to the point, more certain, more judicious. And therefore, so long as we keep following it, we are in no danger whatever of being deceived. After acting we shall not have to repent.

Probably there are few here, who have not, at some time or other of their lives, witnessed a death-bed, who have not performed the last solemn offices for a mother, a father, a wife. Well. Have you been led to remark what their opinions were at that final hour? What gave them satisfaction? What caused them remorse? What were they then disposed either to commend, or to censure? Did you pay

attention, you must easily have perceived that, when they were dying their judgments widely differed from what they thought in the days of their health; insomuch that to all appearance our state would resemble that of the mole, which, if naturalists say true, being blind during all its life, comes at last, when dying, to open its eyes. And really, who is not surprised to mark the change, that men's principles undergo at that crisis, how their tastes alter? Their wishes are no longer the same they used to be. What once pained now pleases them; what once pleased now gives them pain. The man who before drove away the poor from his gate, now shelters them; he, who before avoided the presence of the Priests, now calls for them; he, who before despised the Sacrament, now asks for it; he, who before could not endure any religious conversation, now desires it. Everyone at his death would fain have given more diligence in the discharge of his duties, and lived a life of more strict self-denial. Behold then what is meant by taking death to be your adviser in every action of your life. It is for us well to consider what most persons, on coming to die, would wish they had done; and then, while we are still alive and in health, to go and do the same thing.

11. . . . .[1]

12. Can you suppose that, when *you* come to die, things will appear to you in a light different from that, in which other dying people have seen them? Do you think that the fact of your having found pleasure in a life of strict temperance will be in the hour of death a joy to you? Why then do you now multiply your debaucheries? Will it in that hour be a joy to you that you so regularly attended Church? Why then will you now always be at the club and casino? Will your past love of retirement in that hour be a joy to you? Why then all this longing impatience to have more liberty?

[1] The translator omits a full and detailed account, occupying the whole of this section, of the last hours of Louis the Fat, King of France. The argument is placed in a sufficiently strong light without the aid of this example, which indeed rather serves to weaken it. The change of mind, experienced by the king, seems to regard more the magnificence of his Court and the ensigns of Royalty, things properly belonging to his exalted position, than to any ill-deeds or vicious habits of his past life, such as furnish the ground of true repentance, and give death its terrific sting.

If you will in that hour have cause to congratulate yourself on your devotedness to religion, why then do you now have such a mean opinion of its followers? You know very well that all this heathenish delight you now take in dress will at death sit heavy on your soul; and why then not be more sober-minded?—all this pride and haughtiness; and why not be humble?—all this impudence in jesting; and why not correct it?—all this rancour in bearing hatred; and why not subdue it?—all this fraud in legal contracts; and why not have done with it? Come then, all of you, this morning and take home that most trustworthy adviser, to whose care I now consign you; in other words, let every one of you seriously consider how, in the hour of his death, he would wish he had once acted; and let him decide upon so acting now. "O! Death, thy sentence is good."

SERMON XXVII.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD IN AFFLICTING US.

S. John xi. 3.

"Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick."

1. No one will deny the great difficulty there is in dissembling any strong emotion of our minds; but, if I mistake not, this difficulty is no where so much experienced, as in the case of love. Would you have an instance of hatred concealed under the mask of kindness? Look at Cain inviting Abel to take a pleasant walk.[1] Would you see sorrow hidden under a show of joy? Look at Jezebel on the balcony waiting for Jehu. Would you see envy, hatred, bitterness, and rancour disguised under a sham of religion? Look at Herod hypocritically enquiring after Christ that he might go with the Magi to worship Him. But, in regard to love, who was ever acquainted with a method of hiding it in such a manner, as to make the person, who is really in love, look like an implacable enemy? Nor ought the fact to surprise us. Should a grown-up person wish to screen himself from the persecutions of the Court, he knows how to hit upon a place of concealment, to assume a new name, to put on an altered appearance, as David, when a fugitive from the presence of Saul. But this, in the case of a little child, is not so easily accomplished. So far from knowing how to hide itself, the child, on the contrary, will be the very first to run and meet the persons, who are in search of it. And do not we all know that

[1] See Serm. xii. § 4; xxx. § 2.

love would pass itself off, as being a child; yea, more, a child bearing a torch in its hand. Only conceive then, whether it can be possible for it long to remain in concealment, going about, as it does, with a lighted torch. *The lamps thereof are fire and flames,* (Cant. viii. 6, Vulg.;) not only *fire,* which under the ashes might half die away, but *flames.*

But what am I designing this morning, my hearers, by such an exordium? I will explain. It would appear that CHRIST's object here was to dissemble, for once, the exceeding love He felt for His friend Lazarus, and in order to this He allowed him to fall sick and to pine even unto death. But, think you, that an object of this kind was attainable even by our LORD? By no means. The two sisters had penetration enough to discover that Lazarus was not at all the less possessed of His love, on account of this circumstance; and therefore they did not hesitate to send Him this rather bold message: *Behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick;* not, he whom Thou *didst* love before, but whom Thou *lovest* now. And, accordingly, we observe that, when our LORD reached the grave of His dear friend, He could no longer repress His tears, but troubled Himself, and betrayed His feelings of intense sorrow. *He groaned in the spirit and was troubled;* insomuch that the by-standers, one and all, could not but admire the ardour of His love. What then, my afflicted ones, have you to say to this incident? Speak. Can it be possible—are you the only persons in the world, who cannot detect in your sufferings that most exquisite love, which GOD entertains towards you? Ah, be it not so. Believe me, GOD does not love you at all the less, because He afflicts you; but rather His love is the greater, on account of this very circumstance, though at present you may not understand it. Receive therefore with a willing mind my word of exhortation, when I call upon you to bear every trial He sends you with a patient resignation to His will, blessing and praising Him, who by such trials declares Himself to be your best Benefactor. Let every afflicted soul give good heed to the comfort I have now for it, and endeavour to turn it to the utmost advantage.

2. To trace this comfort to its original source—were we to regard the tribulations, appointed you by GOD, not as being

designed for your benefit, but for His own gratification and pleasure; still, in spite of this, it is clear that no ordinary relief will arise from the consideration that He, who appoints your trials, is God. *As it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done.* (Job i. 21, Vulg.) And what calamity is there, which we ought not cheerfully to welcome, when coming from a hand like His?

I know not whether you have chanced to notice what sometimes occurs in some of the cities of Lombardy with its wintry climate, especially during the gay and licentious season of the Carnival. A smart handsomely dressed young cavalier may happen to walk through the streets, so entirely wrapped up in himself as to annoy no one else, pluming himself, it may be, on his fine auburn hair, as it gently flaps his shoulders, on his elegant costume, on his general style and appearance full in the fashion; when, all of a sudden, he is surprised by a blow on his back from a huge snowball,[1] which has the effect, amid the laughter of all the by-standers, of powdering the upper part of his cloak, his flowing ringlets, and the superb scarlet lining the hood, of which he was so proud. The rage he flies into, at an insult like this, is something indescribable, and it increases ten-fold from his not knowing the quarter, whence the blow came. His countenance reddens with fiery indignation, he looks angrily about him, and is on the point of drawing his sword to avenge himself on any person, whosoever he be, whom he may suspect to be the cause of his public exposure. But, in the act of looking up, he discovers that the blow was inflicted by the hand of a fair lady; upon which he not only immediately calms down and relents, but composing his countenance pays his respects to her with a gentle smile and a most lowly courteous bow; nor, at the same hour on the very next day, does he fail to pass under her window, aspiring to some repetition of a similar favour. Now, my brethren, I cannot account for it, why one is not to pay that homage to God, which one does to a lady, only because she is a lady. You feel sore aggrieved, because you sometimes receive a blow unawares, as from some huge snowball, doing you an injury, when you

[1] Refer to footnote, Serm. xxvi. s. 7.

least expect it; because your son dies, because your business fails, because your employment is wrested from you, because some public disgrace overtakes you. Oh, do but just look up, and see, who it is, that smites you. Is it not the LORD? Cheer up then and compose your mind; for from such a hand, if you will mark it well, every injury is a favour; as S. Augustine said, "It is a pain, and yet a Grace."

3. But you would most seriously err, did you encourage the notion that GOD, in putting you to this pain, designs His own pleasure and gratification. Not so, not so, my hearers. "He is not delighted in our losses." (iii. 22, Vulg.) This highly deserves our attention, as we read it in the Book of Tobit. Settle it then in your minds that He has no other aim and object in view than your advantage alone; or, should there, after all, be some regard to His own interest in treating you thus, it can only be that of a tender loving heart, desirous that you should remember Him, apply to Him for help, admire Him in all His ways. But how can this be? you will say. Can suffering ever be the right method of drawing us to GOD? Why, it is a fact to the contrary, that the ash tree does not possess so much power to drive away the serpent, nor the smoke to drive away the wasps, nor the fire to drive away the lion, as suffering possesses to scare and drive away man, a being so devoted by nature to pleasure. If GOD then would facilitate our attachment to Him, let Him not send us adversity, but prosperity; let Him fondle, and not frighten us. Ah, my brethren, what a folly is this, in your prescribing laws to the ALMIGHTY! Hear His own declaration by Jeremiah: *I will put My fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from Me.* (xxxii. 40.) To prevent men from departing from Me, what shall I do? Shall I flatter them? Shall I coax them? Shall I caress them? Alas! they would soon prove so ungrateful, as to turn their backs upon Me. What means then must I take, *that they shall not depart from Me?* I will terrify them; *I will put My fear in their hearts.* Because, granting it to be quite true that they will then fly from My presence to secure some shelter, yet whither can they go for that shelter, except to Me? *In their affliction they will seek Me early.* (Hos. v. 15.)

4. And, in truth, were our affairs in life always prosperous, had we nothing at any period either to depress us with sorrow or to disturb us with fear, when, my hearers, when should we —I say not, have recourse to GOD—but when should we ever bestow on Him the least thought or any consideration whatever?

Have you forgotten how the disciples of JESUS behaved when they once took ship with Him? As long as the sea continued calm, He was so entirely out of their minds that they allowed Him all alone to go to sleep on a pillow. When however was it, that they really did apply to Him, anxiously crowded about Him, vehemently implored His assistance? *There arose a great tempest in the sea.* (S. Matt. viii. 24.) It was, when they saw the water about them suddenly swelling and the heavens all over them getting black, when they observed the sun unexpectedly withdrawn from their eyes, the hurricanes raging, the thunders bellowing aloud, the billows running mountains high, the torrents of rain descending, and their vessel all but swallowed by the waves on the brink of utter demolition; Oh, then, at that crisis, it was that they all began to cry for mercy; *Lord, save us, we perish!* "Conceive now," says S. Augustine, "the same thing happening every day among us Christians." Were GOD to cease to interfere, were He never to intermix troubles with the enjoyments of time, we should very soon forget Him. Were we always in a calm, always with fine weather, always in a state of prosperity, Oh, how entirely would GOD be out of our minds! What is it, that induces us to apply to Him? A contrary wind, a peril, a reverse. "But, when the anguish caused by afflictions stirs up a tempest in our minds, then our faith, which was before asleep, awakens."

In proof of this assertion, if ever you engaged in any important religious undertaking, tell me, Sirs, what time did you do it? Was it not, when, in want of an heir to your property, you desired of heaven the gift and blessing of a child? If ever you gave away a munificent sum in charity, when was it? Was it not, when laid low on a sick bed you desired of heaven a reprieve from death? If ever you offered a fervent prayer, when was it? Was it not, when suffering

from evil tongues you desired of heaven a deliverance from infamy? Hence, I might almost say, it fares with ourselves as it does with the element of water. To force water to mount upwards, what method are we to adopt? Must we allow it to spatiate leisurely over the flowing plains—allow it full liberty and plenty of room? In that case it will invariably rather sneak down into some lower level: there it will stagnate into a pond; there it will putrify in a marsh; or there it will run wild to empty itself in the ocean. In order to make it mount upwards, whether it will or no, you must confine it within some narrow channel or canal; you must press around it, shut it in, imprison it. It is the same with ourselves. When everything is to our liking, we do nothing but go creeping ignobly upon the earth; *like waters we fall down unto the earth.* (2 Sam. xiv. 14, Vulg.) We stagnate, as to what is good; we become corrupt in vice. Then only, on some pressure being put upon us, do we mount above; thither we soar, when we find ourselves in trouble. Isaiah thus emphatically spake of the people in his time; *Lord, in trouble have they visited Thee.* (xxvi. 16.) Nor is water the only thing, that illustrates what I mean. To make the strings of a musical instrument give an harmonious sound, must we not tighten them with the screw? Let them go down, and they get all out of tune. To make the branches of a spreading vine teem with thick clusters, must we not wound them with the pruning knife? Let them remain, as they are, and see how fruitless they become. That the berries of the sweet juniper may exhale a delicate odour, must we not expose them to the fire? Leave them to themselves, and see how they lose nearly all their fragrance. Nor is it otherwise with the brute beasts; for observation teaches us that, when they suffer from sharp hunger, then they are more fleet on the wing, as is the eagle; then they are more swift in the chase, as is the panther; then they are more ravenous after the prey, as are the wolves. If God therefore, as the Author of nature, can produce such marked effects upon irrational animals by means of subjecting them to some pain, is it at all wonderful that He should be able, as the Author of Grace, to do the same by a like process with ourselves? One in the

Psalms had good reason to address Him in those words, *In Thy anger Thou shalt bring down the people.* (Ps. lvi. 8, Vulg.) Thou shalt bring them to Thyself. For what is it, as Augustine comments on the verse, *in anger to bring down the people,* but this—"Thou shalt compass them about with tribulation, that finding themselves thus beset they may apply to Thee?"

5. The task would be endless, were I to make out a complete list of the souls, recovered to GOD in this way. *When He slew them they sought Him.* (Ps. lxxviii. 34.) But—to give you a small specimen—think you, that wretched prodigal son would have ever resolved to return to his father, but for his forlorn condition, when naked, dirty, starved, destitute, he was compelled to feed the filthy swine, or rather, instead of feeding them, to feed himself by pilfering their vile relics. *I perish with hunger*—this it was, that extorted from his mouth his *I will go unto my father.* (S. Luke xv. 17, 18.) It is a fact that Manasseh, after the most daring impiety, was induced to re-establish the Law of the true GOD, and to restore His Worship; but this was owing to those degrading fetters, that so long had weighed him to the ground. It is a fact that Antiochus, after the most atrocious rebellion, was led to desire peace with the true GOD, and to proclaim His honour; but this was owing to those dreadful worms, that so angrily gnawed his flesh. And holy David—what was the account he gave of himself? He acknowledged that, if at any time with true earnestness of heart he sought the LORD, it was in his days of trouble; *In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord.* (Ps. lxxvii. 3.) Whereas in his days of sunshine—(Oh, his exceeding guilt and wickedness!)—he sat on his house-top contemplating the charms of Bathsheba. We must all then allow that affliction does help to bring us again to GOD; if we cannot make up our minds to say further with S. Gregory, that it does more than help, that it forces and constrains us. —"The evils that oppress us, compel us to apply to GOD."

6. This fact, however, should cause no surprise, when we observe how affliction is the very circumstance, which, in spite of ourselves, renders us, as Ecclesiasticus remarked, more reasonable in our opinions, more meek in our conversa-

tion, more discreet in our general behaviour. "A grievous sickness maketh the soul sober." (xxxi. 2.) Among all the voracious birds, that scour the air, the falcon is said to be the most imperious and intolerant. And yet we see this bird reduced to such abject submission, that the fowler has only to whistle, and it will light on his shoulder, jump on his hand, and, even when the prey is just within its grasp, sometimes drop it untouched, sooner than not obey the voice, that bids it retreat. But from whence comes it that this formidable bird, naturally so stubborn and haughty, should through a certain discipline become all docility and obedience? Ælian tells us a very pleasant story about it. He says that by far the easiest way to tame the falcon is to confine him for a few days near the smoky furnace of a blacksmith's shop: for at the sight of the surrounding flames, the thundering noise of the hammers and of the resounding anvil, he conceives such a feeling of dire consternation, that he at once lays aside his natural lofty spirit. This fact I cannot certify from my own experience; but this I know well, that among ourselves there is no readier method of subduing a naturally proud temper and of moulding it into humility and submissiveness, than by casting it into the furnace of tribulation; "in the furnace of humiliation." (Eccl. ii. 5. Vulg.) Only expose a temper like this to the terrific noise of those sledge-hammers of the ALMIGHTY as they bear down upon us, and no doubt, says Isaiah, it will soon surrender. *Vexation shall make you understand what you hear.* (xxviii. 19, Vulg.)

That self-conceit and vanity have often led people to do the most grossly absurd things is quite undeniable. Xerxes, the Persian Emperor, rated himself so highly, that he believed he had power to enchain the sea. Pronouncing the sea guilty of high treason, because it had dashed into pieces a certain bridge he had constructed on the Hellespont, he had it flogged by the public executioner, and threatened to serve it worse, the next time should it disregard its master. Clearchus, Lord of Heraclea, must needs have an eagle armed with fiery arrows, carried constantly before him, as though he had been Jupiter. Antigonus, Lord of Macedon, must needs have a thirsus, intertwined with green vine-leaves, paraded

before him, as though he had been Bacchus. What shall I say of Heliogabalus, who had his chariot drawn by lions, that when seated in it he might be taken for Cybele, the mother of the gods. But Caligula exceeded them all in his outrageous folly; for he was not satisfied with going about dressed, now as Mars, now as Pluto, now as Pallas, now as Saturn, and to receive in such attire the homage of the priests; but he must needs cut off the heads of the statues of all the deities, then worshipped at Rome, and then have a likeness of himself placed in their stead. He stormed, thundered, and lightened, by means of a certain framework he had contrived for that purpose; and setting up, simpleton as he was, to lord it over the stars, he threatened Jupiter—whom he yet acknowledged to be the chief of all the gods—that he would banish him from the city, and strip him of all the court and homage the people paid him, merely because, by a vexatious shower of rain, he had once presumed to interrupt the public games.

But I want information, as to the precise time, when it was that these madmen launched out into such stupendous follies. Was it, when they perceived themselves to be in any distress or calamity? Certainly not. It was in their prosperous days, when they flattered themselves that Fortune was at their beck, that they had managed to put a drag upon her wheel, and to take the wind out of her sail. I don't think you will meet with an instance of a single person, who, when overtaken by adversity, did not abate somewhat of his pride and arrogance. So it was with Alexander. Wounded in battle, he knew himself to be but a man, when he saw the blood copiously streaming from his veins, as Plutarch relates of him. And so it was with Herod. Struck by an Angel, he allowed himself to be a mere mortal, when he felt the worms cruelly preying upon his entrails, as Josephus records.

Now, if affliction could succeed in bringing such reckless characters as these to their senses, we must surely conclude that it will prove far more effectual in the case of those, who are tractable and much less inclined to folly. When David would have certain persons about him brought to some consciousness of their over-weening presumption, he offered this prayer, *Appoint, O Lord, a Law-giver over them*, or, as

others read it, *a teacher, that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men.* (Ps. ix. 20, Vulg.) Yes, LORD; do provide them some Master, who shall teach them to act in their proper character, as *men.* But who shall this Master be? who shall engage in a task so difficult? who shall persuade them of a truth they so much dislike? Why, affliction must do it; nay, the mere apprehension of affliction will be a Master for them. "Appoint, O LORD, fear over them;" so Jerome translated the verse: "Appoint, O LORD, terror over them," so the Chaldee Paraphrase. But S. John Chrysostom more directly applied the same title, when he calls affliction "our schoolmaster;" the schoolmaster who teaches us how to act in character. See the truth of this demonstrated in the beautiful picture he places before us in one of his Homilies to the people.

7. Take the case of a distinguished young man, who, having formed to his perfect satisfaction a most desirable family connection, is now conducting home his young, noble, wealthy, modest, and lovely bride. The near relations on both sides are invited to the splendid nuptial festivity; and the young couple are seen walking to and fro among the guests with all the joyous hilarity, usual in high life on such occasions. Come now, says the holy man, let us visit for awhile this scene of so much happiness. What do we find there? riotous laughter, licentious conversation, disorderly conduct: one is surfeited with his gluttony, another is stupified with his drunkenness. We see vanity in their modes of dress, luxury and ostentation in all and everything about them . . games, concerts, dances, intrigues, effeminacies, uproar and turmoil on every side; and, in all this babble of tongues, not one single word reaches the ear, which has the remotest tendency to what is good—"a vast torrent of words, but nothing morally, nothing intellectually good." Now what comes next? After the interval of a few days by some deplorable stroke the bride dies, cut down in the full bloom of her loveliness and beauty. The same mansion, which was a few days ago the scene of mirth and merriment, consequently now becomes the abode of mourning and misery. Let us go then, if not too painful, and pay it a second visit. Oh, what

an alteration is here! As we approach the grand entrance, not a single sound of any kind is to be heard. There is the most profound silence, stillness, and order pervading everywhere. We ascend the staircase; and behold, the domestics make their appearance in neglected apparel, with eyes fixed on the ground, with clouded expressions of thoughtfulness, with voices sunk and subdued. If we accompany them into the rooms, we find them stripped bare to the very walls of every meretricious decoration. There is about everything a look of decorum. The glad sounds of the different musical instruments have entirely ceased; and no attention is paid even to the stakes left all in confusion on the gaming table. Where do we see a single face wearing a smile? If any speak, words more serious, sentiments more just, expressions of a more edifying tendency can nowhere be heard. Not only the more thoughtful, but even the young maidens, even the common servants find themselves, all of a sudden, turned into philosophers, as they exchange one with another the most rare and wisest of maxims. One remarks that human life is really nothing but a mere dream, an outward show, a transitory pageant. One expresses astonishment that people can ever idolise so fondly female charms, which, though they blaze and dazzle for a time, yet go out, like a lamp, and leave nothing behind but what is disgusting. Another observes in reply that our duty calls us to be in constant expectation of that hour of death, which spares neither distinctions of birth, nor grandeur of wealth, nor the prime of life; and, while they pursue the subject in this manner, one hears nothing, S. Chrysostom says, but what is good, profitable, and savouring of genuine repentance. Our true teacher is affliction: much does it increase the wisdom of men.

To return from this digression, we have now no cause to feel surprised, if we hear David supplicating in behalf of those, who have not yet known the true ends of life, that affliction should be sent to teach them—*Appoint, O Lord, fear and terror over them, that the Gentiles may know themselves to be but men.* This causes the proud to humble themselves, the licentious to submit to discipline, the riotous to become orderly, the obstinate tractable, and disposes the rebellious

against God, in general, to repent and to return to Him. "Under tribulation all our passions give way; envy, jealousy, concupiscence, pride of riches, carnal sensuality, arrogance, superciliousness, anger, and the whole swarm of vices." Thus far S. Chrysostom in his eloquent and mighty vein of gold.

8. This point now being settled, are we not, Sirs, think you, vastly indebted to God for the afflictions He sends us? Oh, how great, how very great is our obligation! Mark well in this the confirmation of His own endearing words spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah. Listen, listen to them; for they are indeed Divine. *Behold, I frame evil against you.* (xviii. 11.) Could he have expressed Himself better? When He afflicts, He seems to be hurting us: but not so; He *frames* (feigns) *evil.*[1] Never in reality does He show us greater favour. Oh, what signal grace! Oh, what overflowing goodness! *Count it all joy, when ye fall into divers temptations*, so S. James exhorts (i. 2.) And what higher favour than to impose on us a necessity of becoming good, of being devout, of being made worthy of His glory? Are not we the very persons, who so often beseech Him to draw unto Himself our wills, however obstinate they be, that He would force and impel them—"Be favourable, and constrain our rebellious desires to serve Thee." Now this is the very thing He does by afflicting us. And how can we then no sooner see the

[1] Segneri here avails himself of the double meaning of the Latin verb *fingo*, as it signifies to *fashion* and also to *feign*: whereas our word *frame* only expresses the first of these: thus the passage in English loses its force and application. On account of a similar difficulty, the translator, at p. 15, has been obliged to leave the words of Aristotle in the Latin, in which language, be it observed, Segneri made all his quotations, not only those from the Scriptures, but from uninspired writers. For this he has been found fault with by the Capuchin reader in Sacred eloquence F. Giannangelo de Cesena, commonly called Padre Serra, who published a critical analysis of ten of the Sermons of this Quaresimale (Tom. ii. Faenza, 1764.) But the Padre Malmusi, whose corresponding analysis embraces the entire series, and who everywhere defends our eloquent preacher against the stringent but sometimes just reflections of Serra, replies, in defence of the practice of retaining the Latin language in the quotations; first, that all authorities have more weight, when stated as first written; secondly, that such was the practice of the preachers of the Church; thirdly, that this practice shows more respect to an educated audience, such as Segneri addressed. (Ivrea, 1844.)

bit, than, like horses not yet broken in, we begin to turn restive, and would be backing, resisting, and not allowing Him to tame us? Ah, be persuaded that affliction is our way to Heaven. We must suffer, ay, repeatedly suffer; *The reproofs of instruction are the way of life.* (Prov. vi. 23.) I am far from maintaining that this way is not a most trying, difficult, and laborious one; but it is also the most safe and secure.

9. Prudent people agree in thinking that, when one can accomplish a distant journey either by sea or land, the more judicious course is to prefer the latter. But is not then a voyage by sea far more convenient? S. Bernard will answer you in the affirmative and tell you there can be no question about it. You embark in a fine vessel handsomely gilt, and with a joyous bevy of passengers, who make a holiday of it every day. You entertain yourself with them in conversation; you have music, singing, and dancing on board; and, for all this, you do not lose a moment's progress towards your journey's end. Whether you are sitting, or reclining, or fast asleep, you still make way: and Oh, the quick passage you have, when the wind blows directly in your favour! You sport and amuse yourself with the sailors, who, toiling and bustling about in a state approaching to nudity, never fail to suggest some ludicrous idea to your mind. You acquaint yourself with all their technical terms and sea phrases, a collection truly marvellous[1] . . . . And then, in regard to the weather, whatever it is, it can't harm you. Should it rain, you shelter yourself under the awning; should it snow, you take your seat close to the fire: under the shade, cast by the stern, you escape the hot sun and fan yourself cool: and, which is the strangest thing of all, at a very trifling expense you may sometimes easily accomplish a most distant voyage. But, on the other hand, to travel by the land—Oh,

[1] In the original these technical terms are specified, amounting to eighteen in number. Though it would not be difficult to find the several corresponding words in our far more copious nautical vocabulary, yet it is thought best here to omit the specification. It is introduced into the sermon quite needlessly, and is likely rather to distract the attention, more or less, from the subject immediately before us.

the expense, the annoyances, the difficulties of it! In the winter your feet are clogged with lumps of mud; in the summer you are stifled and suffocated with dust: there are steep ascents, rapid declines, flooded plains, which you must get over—no rest by day, no sleep by night. You have to put up with horses to your carriage but half broken in, who will shake the very life out of you; and then the dirty inns, and the incivility of the people, who keep them, and I know not what besides. In spite of all these hardships, I, who have tried both these methods of travelling, deliberately set my seal to the wisdom of that common proverb, which advises us to "praise the sea, but to stick close to the land." And for why? For the very reason, adduced by S. Bernard; "The way over towering hills and rugged rocks may seem the more laborious; but they, who have tried it, have found it the safer." The road by land is unquestionably more fatiguing; but then you have the advantage of having firm and solid ground under your feet; with no death to frighten you on every side, as is the case on the sea, where every curl of the waves, every agitation of the air, makes you suspect that the winds, hitherto your kind friends, are preparing a revolt against you. Now consider this to be precisely what occurs in our case. One can reach Heaven by two modes of travelling: this is certain—by the way of prosperity; or, by the way of adversity. The way, leading to it by prosperity, is the most convenient; that, leading by adversity, is the most safe. Almost all, who are now safely arrived in Heaven, have come by this last. "All that have pleased God passed through many tribulations remaining faithful." (viii. 23, Vulg.) So spake Judith. The Patriarchs, the Apostles, the Prophets, and whosoever else among men was most beloved of God, travelled this way; "all that pleased Him," without any exception: whereas they, who passed with their crowded sails over the other, have, Alas! most of them split on some rock, or foundered on some sand-bank, and so suffered shipwreck. *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* (Prov. i. 32.) Solomon asserted this, and proved himself how true it is.

10. I must confess to you, my hearers, that I feel my blood run cold, whenever I read that place in Scripture, where the

Angel said to the venerable Tobit: "Because thou wast acceptable to GOD, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." (xii. 13, Vulg.) Because thou didst engage in so many labours of love, because thou didst snatch the bread out of thine own mouth to give it to the poor, because thou didst banish sleep from thine own eyes to go and bury the dead; in a word, because thou wast beloved of the LORD, it was necessary—what? necessary that thou shouldst lose thy sight, that thou shouldst be plunged into the utmost misery, that thou shouldst have to contend with extreme destitution? "Because thou wast acceptable to GOD, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee." What then, I ask myself, will ever become of me a poor sinner, if days without a cloud are perpetually shining over my head, if none of my wishes are ever thwarted, but all crowned with success? O my GOD! I have good cause to fear that Thou takest little or no pleasure in me, while Thou keepest back Thy hand from smiting and correcting me! *He, that spareth his rod, hateth his son.* (Prov. xiii. 24.) There is no uncertainty in those proofs from Scripture, by which GOD has convinced me that the afflictions we suffer bespeak the love He bears us. I consult the Book of Maccabees; and what does its author tell me? "It is a token of great goodness, when sinners are not suffered to go on in their ways for a long time, but are presently punished." (2 Macc. vi. 13, Vulg.) I consult Solomon; and what does he testify? *Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth.* (Prov. iii. 12.) I consult Paul; and what does he affirm? *Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.* (Heb. xii. 6.) I consult Job, and what does he reply? *Happy is the man whom God correcteth.* (v. 17.) I carry on my inquiry to the Acts of the Apostles; and what is their unanimous answer? *Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of* GOD. (xiv. 22.) Convinced, overwhelmed, confounded by so many evidences, I cannot but tremble and quake for myself, wretched man that I am, when I thus see myself given over entirely to my own devices; GOD keeping back the rod, refusing to chastise me, and leaving me to myself alone. *If ye are without chastisement,* (Oh, the fearful denunciation, hurled by the Apostle on those, who put the day of tribulation far

from them) *if ye are without chastisement whereof all are partakers,* therefore—I can scarcely finish the sentence, it so alarms me—therefore *ye are bastards and not sons.* (Heb. xii. 8.) Ah, no, not so, my one Supreme Good; for I am firmly resolved to be one of Thy true sons: it must be so; it must be so; and to this end, I readily offer myself to Thy chastening hand: *I am ready for scourges.* (Ps. xxxviii. 18, Vulg.) Choose the kind of rod, that seemeth Thee best: the choice is no affair of mine: hence I do not say, I am ready for the *scourge;* but I say, for the *scourges.* My rebellious sensitive frame shrinks indeed at the thought of the mortifications it may be called to, those sicknesses, with which Thou canst distress me in my person, those reproaches, with which Thou canst degrade me in my character, those bitternesses, with which Thou canst turn my pleasures into gall. But what of this? Will it not, under every circumstance, be a source of abundant consolation that I am able to turn, and to behold Thee on Thy Cross Dying for me? And where is the cup, that can ever be presented to me, however nauseous, out of which Thou hast not drunk the far greater portion before me?—Thou, an outcast; Thou, despised; Thou, calumniated for the most praiseworthy deeds; Thou, betrayed by Thy friends; Thou, persecuted by Thine enemies; Thou, summoned to the seat of judgment, as a malefactor; Thou, trampled down by injustice; Thou, jecred at by insolence; Thou, borne down by brutality; Thou, all wounds in Thy body, all anguish in Thy soul; Thou, in the prime of Thy days dragged to death; Thou, sentenced, crucified, and publicly exposed to shame between two thieves! Were I robbed of every other consolation, but a sight of Thee, whom my soul loveth, how rich should I still remain! Yet, notwithstanding my worst fears, I know that Thou wilt deal with me in tender compassion; for, if Thou shouldest reach forth indeed Thine own cup to my lips, it does not therefore follow that Thy Will would have me also drain it to the very dregs. Can I have a doubt on this matter? It is quite true that, as if it pleased Thee to terrify us, Thou didst once say, *Can you drink the cup that I shall drink?* (S. Matt. xx. 22, Vulg.) But, pardon me, Thou oughtest rather to have said *of* the cup, not *the cup* ab-

solutely: for where is the man, who has ever drunk the whole of its contents? At best, Thou to other men allowest no more than a single taste. But, as for me, of this I am confident, that, whatever trials Thou mayest appoint unto me, all will be in proportion to the little strength I have; and therefore all inconsiderable, all few in number, all exact in weight; for *Thou wilt give us for our drink tears in measure.* (Ps. lxxx. 6, Vulg.) For all Thy dispensations towards me let Thy name be Blessed for ever! Must not every event work for my advantage, as coming from Thee, when tribulation itself proves a blessing? Spare Thyself then all trouble in putting on a shew and semblance of hatred against me in these tribulations. I have found Thee out. What, after all, is the true character of any tribulation whatsoever, as it comes from Thy hands? It is all love, only under the disguise of hatred.

The Second Part.

11. It would highly become me, as the conclusion of this discourse, were I to appear in a cause no less illustrious than that of defending God; defending Him, I mean, from the charge, which is so often brought against Him; namely, that He prospers the wicked. For, if we have found affliction to be so signal a token of the favour, shewn by God to His friends, His elect, those, whom He has destined to glory, what wonder, as the converse to this, should He allow the wicked to be prosperous? The reason for His so doing is evident: He feels no love towards them. *The sinner has excited God's anger against him, according to the multitude of His angers He will not seek him.* (Ps. x. 4, Heb.) But, on second thoughts, I see quite clearly that the charge and complaint of these people against God is utterly groundless; because my belief is, that, search where they will, they will never meet with any wicked person, who was truly happy. They will be able, I fully admit, to find a wicked man rolling in wealth, dazzling the world with splendid titles of honour, a man, courted by fawning hangers-on, who gives himself airs, who can live in the most expensive style, who can entertain sumptuously,

who can *spend his days in wealth,* (Job xxi. 13, Vulg.;) but that he should, for any such reasons, be a happy man—this they cannot find. Ah, how very little is required to make a wicked man perfectly wretched, whosoever he be! It suffices alone, that he *is* wicked. For a proof of this, listen.

Can you tell me, my brethren, which in your opinion of all human afflictions is the greatest? If I ask my aged hearers, they will, for a certain, answer—death; since for some time past death has been heard importunately knocking at their doors, and they have no means of sending him away about his business. If I ask those Cavaliers, they will tell me—dishonour: if these fair Ladies, they will tell me—jealousy: if these over-worked mechanics, they will reply that it is the cruel manner, in which they are day after day defrauded of their just wages by the upper classes. To these courtiers the greatest affliction will be rivalry; to these domestics, servitude; and in like manner every individual will consider his own personal sufferings, as being the severest of all. This would seem to have been thoroughly understood by that famous orator, who said, "The nature of human infirmity is such, that each man estimates what befalls himself to be the heaviest of all calamities." And he accounted for it thus. We have nothing but an abstract knowledge of other men's sufferings: our own we sensibly experience. We speculate on theirs; we actually feel our own.

But, wholly setting aside every personal feeling, let us estimate from the sound deductions of reason, rather than from the false promptings of self-love, the true magnitude of the tribulations, which may befal us. We shall then heartily assent to the entire truth of what S. Augustine says in his Commentary on the Psalms. It is this. "Among all the tribulations, the mind of man is subject to, none can exceed a consciousness of guilt." A guilty tormenting conscience is the greatest of all human afflictions. He shows this quite clearly from the opposite case. Put a man, whose conscience is void of offence, on his trial, by exposing him to any of those afflictions you just considered to be the very greatest of all: he will endure them, you will see, with the utmost composure, and even at times rejoice and exult in them. For instance,

expose him to certain death, you will see him go forth and welcome it with open arms. Expose him to shame, to envy, to destitution, to the sight of some successful competitor, to drudgery under some worthless master, he will evince a spirit of meekness and fortitude, yea more, of contentedness and complacency, under all these varied tribulations. In short, place the man, whose conscience is void of offence, in the worst extremities imaginable, place him in Hell itself, he will find the means even there of comforting his soul. His one great principle, that of conformity to the Will of GOD, will serve to reconcile him to every state of life and to infuse the sweet taste of ambrosia into the gall and bitterness of the worst, that can befal him. S. Bernard, for our learning, attested this truth. "Nothing is more pleasant, nothing more safe, than a good conscience. Let the body be worn out with pain, be emaciated with fastings, be lacerated with scourges, be distorted on the rack, be killed with the sword, be tortured with punishment, the conscience will not feel it."

On the other hand, where will the man, whose conscience condemns him, ever find a moment's peace? Let him amuse himself in his gardens, plunge even into the most licentious society, at every turn the wretch carries within him the full undisguised horror of that Tribunal, which convicts him of rebellion against the King of kings. Must he not, of necessity, make himself miserable, when he thinks of the Glory he has forfeited, the terrors of that Hell, which now stares him in the face? *The wicked are like the troubled sea that cannot rest.* (lvii. 20.) So Isaiah describes them. Their inward sufferings are so severe, that they are utterly at a loss how to assuage them, except it be by contending against the first lessons of their early education, except it be by denying the Faith, by disputing the Immortality of the soul, by refusing to acknowledge either Heaven or Hell, by secretly turning atheists, so as to pass their days under the desperate notion that *there is no God.* (Ps. xiv. 1.) But, Oh, their sad, forlorn condition! For this idea alone of their being driven to such an expedient is quite enough of itself to consummate their misery. Should they ever flatter themselves that they have managed to keep their minds tolerably quiet, the most awful

truths of Revelation, like so many savage dogs, roused from a short slumber, will suddenly rush upon them, and by the fierceness of their joint attack wring from their hearts, however callous, a confession, despite themselves, that there is a GOD in the world still,—a GOD, too, such as they would fain not have Him to be. To this would succeed those shadowy midnight spectres, those hideous apparitions, that inability to take any rest, even in the sweet embraces of sleep, the soothing nurse of every other human woe. *When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint* —these words of Job portray the sinner's utter misery—*then Thou scarest me with dreams and terrifiest me through visions.* (vii. 13, 14.)

For we must never believe, my brethren, that furies, such as we see represented on the stage at our theatres, ever break loose from the abyss of hell with their flaming torches and their knotted snakes, in order to scourge ungodly men. No, Sirs, it is their own guilt, it is their own conscience, that hews them in pieces. Those visions, the dark creation of their own minds, those deep drawn sighs, those sudden starts and shudders—these are the household furies of all wicked doers. How then can you pronounce any of their number to be happy? *They spend their days in good things.* No doubt they do. They spend them in sporting, they spend them in dancing, they spend them in tilts and tournaments, they spend them in revelry, they spend them in such like frivolous pastimes. But it is one thing to *spend* one's days *in good things*, and quite another to *spend good days*. Never can it be said of them with any truth, that the days they spend are happy and prosperous.

And so all my labour among you to-day would have been quite uncalled for, if I had undertaken to justify the happiness of wicked men; because, for a certainty, never once in their lives are they happy. Their outside appearance is all deception; it may be compared to a made-up female beauty, anxious with her painted cheeks to obtain admiration and to look well at a distance: inspect her more nearly; she will disgust, instead of surprise you. This is not solid substantial happiness: it is a mere layer upon the surface, and a very

thin layer too. Believe this on the credit of Seneca, a wise heathen, and conclude with him that "No wickedness, however fortune may deck it out with her favours, will go unpunished: for the punishment of sin consists in our having committed it." This being now proved, let us shut up our discourse in this way. Tribulation falls to the lot of all wicked persons, and perhaps it more severely afflicts them, than it does the righteous: but here is the great difference: the tribulations of the righteous are a pledge of an everlasting reward; those of the wicked are an earnest of an everlasting punishment. For it happens to them, as it did formerly to the infamous people of Sodom, whose suffering by a conflagration in this world by no means exempted them from a conflagration in another, but was only its beginning.

SERMON XXVIII.

ON MAKING MERRY IN A LIFE OF SIN.

S. John viii. 46.

"Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"

1. In the time of Charles the Seventh, king of France, an obstinate war was raging in Gascony between the French and the English; and, as from the beginning the French had the worst of it, they despatched one of their chief officers to the king with a request for reinforcements, and that in a personal interview he might acquaint him with the urgent wants of the army, the losses already sustained, and the hazardous state of the war altogether. This officer, who lost no time in reaching the palace, found the king surrounded with his barons in the midst of mirth and gaiety; so that he was obliged to wait a long time, before he could procure an audience. The king at length received him with much condescension, and taking him familiarly by the hand conducted him through the state-apartments, all of which were crowded with card-tables, harps, and guitars, and he began to talk with him about the tournaments they were getting up at the court, by way of passing their time pleasantly, the tilting, and various theatrical amusements. At such a discourse the prudent officer long kept quite silent, until the king in an easy way asked his opinion—what he thought of the public diversions about to come on. Then, being forced to speak, "It appears," he

replied, with a look of gentle surprise, "it appears, that one might search in vain all over the world for a person, bearing with your Majesty's cheerfulness and good spirits the loss of his possessions." The king felt the force of this shrewd remark, and turning the matter over in his mind, soon changed the subject of conversation. He listened patiently to the account given him of the advance of the enemy and the wants of his soldiers, and immediately took decided measures to have sent the necessary reinforcements.

It is, my hearers, to be most firmly believed that no loss of fortresses, nor of cities, nor of whole kingdoms can for a moment be compared with the deprivation Christians suffer, when by the commission of a single deadly sin they lose at once the favour of their God. And yet, Oh, that one could visit and inspect their houses! At one and the same time we should discover some of them seated round a gaming-table, others chatting together at an evening rout, others dancing at a revel, others bursting with laughter at a theatre, and all solely intent on beguiling the livelong day and night in carousing and serenading. And is it then possible, ye unhappy sinners, that you can suffer the loss of your own selves with so much cheerfulness and merry making? Ah, would you even now, at this height of your gaiety, but pause a moment and reflect on your deplorable loss, you would not imitate the foolish conduct of this king; but, Oh, what would be your tears and your bitter lamentations! You would dash your beloved cards and dice to the ground; with indignant haste you would tear yourself from those scenes of dissipation, and retire to the most secluded chamber in your house, there to shut yourself up in solitude, and never cease weeping and wailing, until you could feel that your loss was repaired!

But evils of this immense magnitude are concealed from your view. And why? because you dislike to think about them, and are averse to their being mentioned to you; so far are you from going, of your own accord, to find some person, some judicious friend, some earnest Clergyman, to tell you of them, in answer to the inquiry, *Which of you convinceth me of sin?* In this state of mind, you will pardon me this morning, if I claim an audience of you; that, as a

faithful servant, I may lay before you the state of your affairs. If, after hearing my report, you deem it a laughing matter, continue to your heart's content in your fun and wild frolics, since your souls are in your own keeping; but, if you obtain through my discourse but a faint glimpse of the melancholy state you are in, I must then beseech you to give me an answer to this question—Does the whole world present a prodigy so astounding, and yet so common, as that, which, in my opinion, is seen in the man, who is daring enough to make merry in a life of sin?

2. Perhaps you need be reminded that, prior to your commission of deadly sin, such was the dignity of your position, that you were not only the most honoured servants of God, but His most endeared friends; not only His most endeared friends, but even His own glorious children. On His adopting you unto Himself by grace He exalted you to a participation in His own attributes, His own privileges, His own titles, His own riches—to be brief, He made you *partakers of the Divine nature.* (2 S. Pet. i. 4.) S. Peter declared this of all the faithful. From this pre-eminent dignity you have been cut off by your transgressions: and now God no longer regards you in the light of His children, nor as His friends, nor even as His servants; but, on the contrary, He openly disclaims all connection with you—*I know you not.* (S. Matt. xxv. 12.) And can you be so merry and so light-hearted? The wretched Esau, on his perceiving that his father had but alienated from him the right of primogeniture, and transferred it with his paternal blessing to Jacob, was so exceedingly pained and racked with anguish, that immediately, even in his father's sick room, he could not forbear to roar like a lion, pierced unawares to the heart by the fatal arrow. *Esau having heard his father's words roared out with a great cry.* (Gen. xxvii. 34, Vulg.) Ah, my beloved sinners, little were it, had God only alienated from you the distinguished rights belonging to the first born; for in that case some secondary blessing might have been still reserved for your comfort. But you have lost your very adoption and sonship itself; so that by no possibility can any remaining blessing be in store for you; but rather that malediction, which is to be

thundered by CHRIST into the ears of the reprobate. "If you die, a curse shall be your portion." (Ecclus. xli. 9.) Nevertheless, instead of *roaring out* with the disinherited Esau, you rather make merry, as if you were the enriched Jacob.

3. To come to particulars. Are you not conscious that GOD has now no longer any dwelling in your hearts, nor you any place in His; but that the lovely interchange of affections, before subsisting between you both, is already broken off? We know GOD, in His immensity, to be more sensibly present in every place, than is the sun over our heads. "He reaches to every place in His complete fulness," as S. Cyprian declares with as much unction, as conciseness. But He takes up His abode in the souls of the righteous, after a peculiar and far more perfect manner. Hence the Angel, on his appearance to Gideon, could not do a greater honour to him, nor could the Archangel do a greater honour to the Virgin, when he saluted her, than by their intimating to them severally that the LORD was about to dwell with them; *The Lord is with thee!* (Judg. vi. 12; S. Luke i. 28.) But let me ask you, my tenderly beloved sinners, to whom among you could such honour, as this, now be shown? *The Lord is far from the wicked.* (Prov. xv. 29.) You are assured of this by the wisest of men. GOD has removed Himself at as great a distance from you, as the south wind is from its enemy the north. Much sooner would the sparrow-hawk be induced to live amicably in the same nest with the turtle dove, and the wolf to take up its quarters with the lamb, than could a sinner and GOD abide together in the same heart. How is it then possible for you to feel your minds at ease for a single moment? Is there any enterprise too great for the heart of a man to venture on, if GOD be only present with him? Search the Holy Scriptures, and you will find the record of those men of renown, who in the strength of that Presence alone, could at all times reckon upon doing glorious things. *I am with thee* —this was GOD's assurance to Isaac, when he would encourage him not to fear the snares of the Philistines. *I am with thee*—this was GOD's assurance to Jacob, when He would strengthen him to undertake the return to his own land. *I am with thee*—this was GOD's assurance to Moses, when He

would send him forth to deliver Israel from bondage. *I am with thee*—this was GOD's assurance to Joshua, when He would authorise him to assume the charge of the people. *I am with thee*—this was GOD's assurance to Jeremiah, when He would incite him to preach the truth to the ungodly. But what can a man, when once he is deserted by GOD, ever hope or expect? *Woe to them when I depart from them,* (ix. 12:) so spake the same LORD by the mouth of Hosea. In the case of Samson, did not the loss of GOD amount to the loss of manly strength? In the case of Manasseh, was not losing GOD losing liberty? In the case of Saul, was not losing GOD losing the kingdom? In the case of Eli, was not losing GOD losing the priesthood? In the case of Uzziah, was not losing GOD losing health? In the case of Solomon, was not losing GOD losing riches? In the case of Israel, was not losing GOD equivalent to losing every blessing? And this GOD, O! ye sinners, is the very same GOD, whom you also have lost—yes, this very same GOD!—and still, does the loss cause you so little anguish of soul?

4. And, in losing Him, what good thing is there, which you have not lost as well? At all events, you have forfeited every reward due to your previous well-spent life; so that whatever works of piety and virtue, you have done in times past, it now all goes for nothing. Hear how GOD determined this by Ezekiel; *When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live?*—By no means, Sirs, by no means shall the unrighteous *live.* Then what follows? *All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned; in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.* (xviii. 24.) Oh, what a denunciation, enough to strike a panic into a heart of stone! GOD here tells you, that all the good works you sinners have done in times past are now buried in such profound oblivion, that, were sudden death unhappily at this moment to carry you off, never through all eternity would you have to enjoy any recompense for past obedience, but only have to suffer the penalty of present sin. Oh, what a forfeit! Oh, what a decline! Oh, what a downfall, such as can only

be deplored with tears of blood! And yet, after having thus deplorably thrown yourselves away, can you find it still in your hearts not merely to laugh, but even to rejoice, *as men rejoice when they divide the spoil?* (Isa. ix. 3.) None of you, I am sure, in the excellent services you have done the Almighty, can vie with those rendered Him once by the holy Saints, whom the Church commemorates. To no such glorious rewards of self-denying obedience to His Will can you possess any claim: and yet the subject is one, that will repay your consideration. The many fasting days you have observed during the whole course of your lives, the many sermons you have attended, the many sums you have bestowed in charity, the many devotional exercises you have performed in public and private, where are they all now? *They shall not be mentioned*—Oh ye unhappy men!—*they shall not be mentioned!* And do you not, on hearing this, break out into tears and lamentations, yea, into terrible *roarings?*

5. If a poor husbandman had been at great pains and expense in planting on his family property a number of trees of foreign growth, so various and valuable of their kinds that neither the famous gardens of Alcinous, nor those of Atlas, or of Semiramis, could scarcely have boasted the like of them; and if, when their branches were heavy laden and their fruit perfectly ripe, a sudden storm in the night were to arise, which would dash every one of them to the ground in utter ruin, what would be the unhappy man's feelings in the morning at the astounding sight of the melancholy devastation spread around him? Oh, how he would immediately strike his hands in despair, and cry aloud and bewail, like one crazed! And yet how much more to be deplored is the havock, which sin has made of your souls! For not only has it stripped them bare of their fruit, a produce more excellent in every way, at the point of time, too, when they had just reached their full maturity, but it has struck the very trees themselves to the ground, cruelly tearing them up by the roots, so as to *root out all the increase.* (Job xxxi. 12.) This is as good as to say, that sin has eradicated the virtues of the Christian character out of your hearts, absolutely incapacitating you, as you now are, from bringing forth any good fruit unto eter-

nal life. *Their root is dried up*—so spake the ALMIGHTY by Hosea—*their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit.* (ix. 16.) This is that destruction, which the HOLY SPIRIT designed to point out, when He compared the wretched soul of a sinner to the vine rooted up by the furious tusks of the wild boar, as we hear David singing in the 80th Psalm; or to the dwelling sacked by the unsparing violence of the midnight robber, as we hear Jeremiah bewailing in his 49th chapter; or to the city demolished by the ruthless onset of the insolent besiegers, as we hear Job describing it in the 15th chapter. And can you, all this while, treat these things, as so many occasions of festivity? For what then are you reserving your tears, if now without a single tear shed you can contemplate the exceeding degradation of your souls?

6. We are informed by S. Jerome that, after the fall of Jerusalem, when with its dependencies it became subject to the conquering power of the Romans, the Jews had a custom of assembling themselves together from the adjoining districts on a stated day once in the year, in order that they might mourn in a body over their common loss. Their observances on this occasion were, if I mistake not, the most remarkable practised by any people under a national calamity. I will tell you what they were: for certainly this is something worth knowing. Every Jew in the time of S. Jerome was strictly prohibited setting his foot in Jerusalem, save and except on this stated day, therefore called "the day of weeping," and it was precisely the anniversary of that disastrous day, when the Roman legions with their streaming banners and naked swords overwhelmed and utterly wasted the city. But not even on that day were the Jews allowed the full and unrestrained privilege of going thither to weep. They had first to make considerable payment in money for this permission. Hence you might have seen the poor unfortunates, not grudging any expense, provided they could have liberty to discharge in weeping the anguish of their souls. In this the justice of GOD so marvellously ordered it, that the persons, who had formerly carried their audacity so far, as to purchase with money the Divine Blood of CHRIST, were now to be themselves under the bitter necessity of paying money for

their tears. The holy Doctor thus expresses it; "They obtain with a sum of money the licence to deplore the destruction of their city, in order that, just as before they had bought the Blood of CHRIST, even so now they may buy their own tears." Wherefore on the day appointed the unhappy Jews arrived in multitudes from every quarter, men and women, young and old, virgins and widows. All made their appearance clad alike in deep mourning, with their hair dishevelled, their dress neglected, their garments covered with dust, their countenances dejected—pale, sad, silent, so far at least as the bursts of passionate emotion, their deep-seated sorrow, would allow them to be silent. In the manner of their proceeding they manifested but too clearly the displeasure of GOD against them; in their look, their step, their apparel, their entire demeanour. When they reached the gates of the city, they closed their ranks; and, as they made their doleful entrance within the walls, they all at the same time and with one voice broke out into a general groaning, and by their attitudes and gestures further expressed the profound anguish of their souls. The sight of those streets, the gaze at their houses, now Alas! so sadly changed, since the time they were occupied by their fathers, served to redouble their grief and to add a fresh bitterness to their woe. And then, according to a custom of their own, as affecting indeed as it was superstitious, they lost no time in making anxious inquiries and searches for their Temple, knowing perfectly well meanwhile that it no longer existed: and so, because not able to find it, they became inconsolable, and went roaming from one quarter to another, from one street to another, dismally howling over the ashes of the Sanctuary, over the Altar laid low, the towers razed to the ground, the treasury-houses dismantled, the porticoes lying in ruins. Deep as their affliction was, it was fearfully aggravated by the sound of their musical instruments, which from time to time chimed in with their piteous moanings; for, on such a solemnity, they remembered to take with them their trumpets and favourite harps, no longer now, as formerly, of pleasant sound, but all sad and grating; so that, according to the remark made by Jerome, these very instruments also were seemingly

transformed, having exchanged the accents of delight for those of sorrow. The poor souls continued thus occupied for many hours, shedding tears and hemmed in by numerous bands of soldiers, who were called thither to protect the city, as is usual when crowds are collected, from the fear of some foreign attack or some popular insurrection. When the time for their departure from the city arrived, they were utterly at a loss, so to speak, how to tear themselves away from the sight of those dear-beloved walls. They fell down at the soldiers' feet, craving earnestly some further short indulgence to their tears: and these soldiers, as indifferent to such entreaties as they were intent upon their own interests, answered by saying, "If you would weep more, you must pay more." Would you believe it? Some of them, poor, or tenacious of their money, as they were, were nevertheless induced to submit to this exaction. Producing a second sum they paid it for a second grant of tears, as if they had not yet done enough wherewith to satisfy their sadness. "Already their complexion is faded; the hair on their heads is wild and streaming; and the soldiers demand payment for letting them weep longer." This circumstance so strongly impressed the mind of S. Jerome, that he did not hesitate to compare that day of the Jews' weeping to the Day of Universal Judgment; and so he closes his narrative with this striking appeal—"With this spectacle before him who can entertain a doubt concerning the Day of tribulation and distress of nations, the Day of weeping and wailing, the Day of gloom and darkness, the Day of storm and tempest, the Day of the trumpets' din and dire alarm?"

Ah, my dear Christians, draw near. Why have I taken so great pains in giving you the details of this history, were it not that I might ascertain whether it were possible for me to bring it home to yourselves? Here is the wonder! The mere loss of an earthly temple so deeply affected and mortified the hearts of stubborn Jews, that they consented to pay a large sum of money for a licence to express their sorrow: nor did they shrink from facing the taunts and reproaches of a hostile populace, nor the insolence of the soldiers, nor the vile mob purposely collected in crowds to insult their

nation—a nation indeed, that has always called for men's pity, and yet never obtained it. And you, who are conscious of your having lost, not the temple of God, but that, which is infinitely more precious, the God of the temple, take your loss to heart so very little that, although we are constantly inviting you to mourn and bewail it, you yet can think of nothing else but your amusement and laughter? And when are we to expect the time, when you will consider matters soberly, examine your hearts, search them closely, and make your anxious inquiry whether God be there? When is it that you purpose applying your minds to this matter, and for once to mourn on its account? The days pass, the months pursue their rapid course, the day the anniversary-day of your desolation comes round. Call it to mind, meditate upon it, and say,—It was this very day last year that I had my revenge of that person, or that I defiled that virgin purity, or that I indulged that silly caprice. The preachers now invite you to confer with them; your pastors are waiting to see you; for willingly would they mingle their tears with yours in bitterly deploring your sad estate. And you, in the hardness of your hearts, can laugh at them for their pains, and are so far from asking permission to weep that, when yourselves are asked, you refuse doing so. Ah, that I could procure an admission for my own afflicted spirit into your hearts; there to speak and act, as it were, in your stead; for there would I shed my tears on your account; there in my inconsolable distress for you would I make the inquiry, *Where is now thy God?* What too is become of that noble assemblage of virtues, which used here to have their dwelling-place? Where is that multitude of good works, that rich treasury of graces, which was wont in time past here to have their habitation? Ah, thou infernal robber, it is not difficult to discover the person, who has despoiled this forlorn heart of every grace and benediction. *The adversary has spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things.* (Lam. i. 10.) Whatsoever things were lovely, and of good report, and of costly price, all of them he has carried far away. Charity is no longer here; faith is left half dead; hope languishes; prudence is become blind; fortitude is powerless; temperance

is destroyed; justice is supplanted, yea, murdered in the very streets. And, to sum up all losses in one word, GOD is lost!

7. GOD lost?—Happy indeed were your condition, did your woes terminate but here! But it is, in my opinion, a far more serious evil for you, that, besides losing His friendship, you have incurred His wrath and indignation. With a GOD against you and your enemy, have you any courage, ye sinners, to laugh?—with GOD your enemy? Why, an ancient Roman, whose duty it was to plead a particular cause in the senate, when he came to hear that Tully, the formidable orator of the day, was engaged on the opposite side, allowed this circumstance to prey so much upon his spirits, and so entirely renounced on account of it all hope of success, that in a fit of despair he killed himself. And seemeth it to you something quite immaterial, that, in that cause, which must decide the final destiny of your very life—whether you are to rejoice for ever with the Angels, or to groan for ever with the reprobate—that in so momentous a cause, as this, you have GOD opposed to you? But, in point of fact, ye miserable beings, the cause is over; already it has been decided against you. The dreadful sentence of your everlasting perdition is dated so far back, as from the first sin you committed. Hell has already opened wide her jaws to swallow you down. *Hell hath enlarged herself.* (Isa. v. 14.) Her furies are impatient for your arrival. Her dragons even now with eager mouths stand waiting, every one of them, till that foot, which still clings to the verge of the precipice, should slip and carry you down: and, while on the very verge, are you still intent upon laughing, and joking, and all sorts of pleasantry? Poor creatures, who is it, that holds you up by the hand? Who still preserves you in safety? Who at all sustains your courage? Are you then able to save yourselves, when and how you like?

8. The very worst circumstance in your case, sinners dearly beloved, is this, that since the time, when you revolted in your hearts against GOD, all the creatures are now turned to be your enemies. Hence who knows whether, instead of defending you from this precipice, they may not prefer casting you down headlong over it? S. Augustine wisely observed

that, "If any servant breaks his allegiance with his master, he not only provokes that master against him, but with him most justly too the whole family." Accordingly, when that dastardly Shimei, being out of David's reach, did him an injury, loading him with reproaches, and pelting him with stones, the royal attendants were up at once, vying with each other, who should be the first to offer to go and cut off the villain's head; *Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.* (2 Sam. xvi. 9.) All the creatures, whether rational or irrational, dead or living, animate or inanimate, are, it is well known, the household-troops of the true God. And therefore the holy man says they all aspire, each as best he may, to execute vengeance on the transgressor. "*Let me go,*" cries aloud the earth, and I will engulph him in my deep hollows. "*Let me go,*" cries aloud the water, and I will carry him off in my swift rapids. "*Let me go,*" cries aloud the air, and I will shake him in pieces with my tornadoes. "*Let me go,*" cries aloud the fire, and I will devour him with my fury; and so in like manner every cloud, every wind, every arrow, every poison, every savage beast all put themselves forward with one unanimous cry—"*Let me go.*"

And let no person consider what I say to be the common flourish of metaphor, rather than sober truth; for it is allowed on all hands that these creatures have more power to afflict a wicked man, than they have to afflict a good man. You yourselves must know that, so long as man retained his innocency, not one of all the creatures could injure him, inasmuch as he had the mastery over them all. S. Ambrose was even of opinion that, during that period, roses grew without thorns, herbs without poison, and that vipers were not venomous. Another goes still further, and in his great anxiety to account for the fact that, when the devil would address Eve, he chose the form of the serpent in preference to that of the lion, or wolf, or any other animal, says with Procopius of old, that this arose from that excellent tact the serpent possessed, by means of which it crept into terms of favour and familiarity with the woman, beyond what any other creature did; so that she used to make it quite a companion and plaything. But, when man rebelled against God, all the creatures re-

belled against man—"They armed themselves to take vengeance"—and therefore, if they have a permission to afflict any, it must be to afflict the wicked, rather than the good. "Teeth of wild beasts and scorpions, serpents and the sword punishing the wicked to destruction." (Eccl. xxxix. 30.) What then is likely to be your end, ye sinners, in your present wretched state, while you refuse to give up that bad connection, while you decline to repair that injured character, while you persist in rejecting those overtures of reconciliation? What would befall you, were any of these creatures once to obtain Divine permission to ensnare your life? What, if some tiny but highly venomous insect were to bite you unawares? What, if you were exposed to a swollen torrent? What, if you were struck dead by a thunder-bolt? What, if you were suddenly to find yourself buried under some ruin? Would not your soul in such a case be lost for ever? How then with a danger like this staring you in the face can you possibly laugh? I will say with S. John Chrysostom, "What enjoyment can we ever find in a place, where there is fear, where there is peril, the apprehension of such great evils, tribunals, indictments, the wrath of the Judge, the sword, the executioner, the dungeon, and the transportation?"

9. You are relying perhaps on your guardians the holy Angels, that they will be your special defenders under all such hazards? Most gladly indeed do they protect good men, in whose behalf they are incessantly on the move, stooping without the least feeling of pride to every kind of humiliating service. . . . But it goes sadly against them to proffer any, even the smallest, assistance to the wicked; for, as they regard them in the light of enemies of their common Master, with what heart or on what principle would you have them go forth to their rescue? I am far indeed from asserting that your appointed guardian Angels will ever utterly forsake you. They still track your steps, wherever you go. Ay, they accompany you to those scandalous gaming-houses, to those licentious meetings, to those haunts of abandoned conversation. But can you possibly expect them to keep you company beyond the threshold? Ah, I can well conceive how they stand without, beholding you with tears; and that

the more you give the rein to your loose ways the more they spend themselves in bitter lamentations. *Behold these valiant ones shall cry without; the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.* (Isa. xxxiii. 7.) How then can you expect that, when you so deeply afflict them, they can feel any anxiety to engage in your deliverance? But if the Angels, whose office it is to protect you, should quite abandon you, who then will preserve you from your many besetting dangers, both temporal and eternal? Consider what at last must become of a ship, exposed to the storm, without any pilot; of a carriage near the brink of the precipice, without any driver; of a tender lamb in the tangled forest, without any shepherd; of a blind man in the rocky pass, without a guide; of a child in the dark, without a helper. Even so, the great S. Basil declares, sooner or later must it fare with those, who by grieving their guardian Angel have driven him quite away, or, at least, by their misdeeds have removed him far off. *Health is far from the ungodly.* (Ps. cxix. 155.)

10. Nor can it avail you in perils like these to have recourse to prayer. What! Know you not that your present irreligious life is a complete bar to the acceptance of your prayers? Hear how solemnly God protests against them at the very beginning of Isaiah; *When ye make many prayers I will not hear.* (Isa. i. 15.) Oh, how dear it cost Antiochus to learn this lesson, when seized by a dreadful malady he immediately turned to God with the most fervent entreaties; but all to no purpose. "Then this wicked person prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not to obtain mercy." (2 Macc. ix. 13, Vulg.) For there is but one case, in which those, who live in sin, are heard: it is, when they heartily implore its forgiveness. On all other occasions God is not wont to hear them; or, He does, it may be, sometimes hear them, but then it is to augment their misery; and therefore, as the most learned Suarez explains it, there was no mercy for Antiochus, inasmuch as he implored not the forgiveness of his impieties, but the recovery of his bodily health. If then your prayers—offer them with all the fervour you are able—can never, so long as you retain a love for any sin, be accepted by God, but rather must be

hateful and detestable in His sight, as it is so fearfully declared in the Proverbs; *He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*, (xxviii. 9,) is not your situation, beyond any other, quite hopeless and forlorn?

To what quarter can you apply for help under your difficulties, for consolation in your sorrows, for prosperity in your business, for protection in your dangers? With David do you set yourself to praise GOD? "Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner." (Ecclus. xv. 9.) S. Chrysostom shrewdly observes, that, when that mighty monarch invited all the different creatures, not excepting the most terrible of their number, to come and join him in singing his psalms, when he invited even the serpents and the fiercest dragons, he excluded sinners: them he invited not. We know how he once said, *Praise the Lord, ye dragons;* but he never once said, "Praise the LORD, ye sinners." So certain it is that even the song of praise from the lips of a sinner is not pleasing to GOD. "Scorpions, serpents, dragons,"—hear the exact words of S. Chrysostom—"scorpions, serpents, dragons, are invited to praise the LORD."—Who is excluded then?—"the sinner; he alone is excluded; he alone, poor wretch! is cut off from this Sacred choir." What then will you do? Will you stretch out your hand to the poor in abundant charities? GOD, while you are living in sin, loathes your money. Will you embark on distant pilgrimages? GOD, while you are living in sin, disdains your offerings. Will you engage in strict austerities? GOD, while you are living in sin, has no pleasure in your fasts. Do even all the good, that lies in your power, so long as you are living in sin, your best works will nothing avail in your favour. *Incense is an abomination unto Me*—so GOD declares by Isaiah—*your new moons and your appointed feasts My soul hateth, they are a trouble unto Me. I am weary to bear them.* (i. 13.) Neither will it avail that you attend the Holy Communion, or that you hear the sermon, or that you clothe the naked, or that you relieve the infirm, or that you entertain pilgrims, or that you perform any other act of religion: and although—mark what I say—although it is far better you should undertake any such

actions, even after you have committed a sin, than leave them undone, because, on their account, as learned men teach, GOD, in His gracious mercy, is usually more disposed to endure us with much long suffering: so that, although *weary*, He *bears* with us still—nevertheless, the plain truth must be spoken: it is quite certain that all these good works are dead, and that they have no life in them.

11. In such a condition, my dear-loved sinners, what have you further to expect? Nothing but a voluntary conspiracy of all the creatures against you; that the earth, the waters, the air, the fire, the plants, the animals, yea, the very devils should at last extort from GOD what they so long desired—His licence desperately to tear your soul from your body; in doing which they will vie with each other, each exclaiming, "He is mine, he is mine. Why delay a single moment to carry him off with us?" *God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him.* (Ps. lxxi. 11.) And so far are you from being roused to any sense of your wretchedness, that, instead of deploring it, you make a boast of it. Oh, what stupidity! Oh, what infatuation! I remember to have read of the sea-calf, that it exults in the storm, and never enjoys its sleep more, or is more buried in its slumbers, than during a tempest. But this does not surprise me, because some writers have made it the symbol of a good conscience, as we well know that Job said, *Thou shalt lie down and none shall make thee afraid.* (xi. 19.) Let then Peter, imprisoned at Jerusalem, let him enjoy his rest. Let Paul, imprisoned at Philippi, let him enjoy his rest. The thing that astonishes me, is, to find wicked men lying exposed to far more dangerous hazards, who yet, to all appearance, live an easy joyous life, as if they were righteous. This, however, is a fact. Hear the decisive words of the preacher, "There are wicked men, who are as secure as though they had the deeds of the just." (Eccl. viii. 14, Vulg.) I have never been able to explain this, but on the supposition that these unhappy persons never once reflect upon the evils surrounding them; or, it may be, are wholly unconscious of them. But now, since the matter has been plainly stated to you by one, who, though your servant, is yet bound to speak

faithfully, is it not the height of extravagance, that any sinner should dare to laugh and to make merry in a life of sin?

The Second Part.

12. Can any one tell me the reason why sin, when it is so extremely pernicious to the soul, is yet so little regarded? The reason is simply this. The injury, it does, affects the soul. Were a man, every time he utters some blasphemous word, to have his tongue dreadfully swollen in his throat; or, at every theft he commits, to have his hand withered; or, at every fraud he perpetrates, to have his mind deranged; or at every act of uncleanness he indulges in, to have his body covered with a filthy leprosy, think you we should then see so many blasphemers, so many thieves, so many deceivers, so many whoremongers in the world? But because the injury, done by sin, is spiritual and is something within us, people do not notice it. The lightning acts in a most extraordinary way. It falls accidentally upon a chest, full of gold; it consumes the gold inside, and crumbles it to ashes: but it leaves the chest outside so untouched, that to the eye it looks, as if it had not received the least harm. But, for all that, the stroke has penetrated it through and through. Sin acts just in the same manner. It acts, like the lightning: it reduces a king —such a king, as David was—to nothing; but it leaves him, bodily, just as he was before—the sceptre in his hand, the crown on his head, the collar about his neck, and the royal mantle on his shoulder—and the poor monarch still remains utterly unconscious of his being hurt. What then in this case must be done? Why, there must be a Nathan to show him his real condition. And this is the very office I have endeavoured this morning to discharge for your benefit. I have *convinced you of sin.* Therefore, I have no doubt but that you acknowledge how great your loss is, although a hidden one; and that, consequently, a regard to your own best interests will move you, from a sense of sin, to tears and contrition rather than to mirth and merriment.

13. But I have no wish to force you to do this from any selfish motive of your own interest. Suppose sin did you no harm whatever, that it even procured you prosperity and happiness, still, tell me, in this case, can you possibly regard it under a ludicrous aspect, knowing how deeply it grieved your merciful Heavenly benefactor? "Ye have provoked Him that made you;" these are the words of Baruch, "Ye have provoked the everlasting GOD." (iv. 7, Vulg.) And how, most beloved sinners, has He ever so acted towards you, as to justify all the pleasure you feel in doing Him this immense wrong? Had He been your greatest enemy, an enemy perpetually on the watch to ensnare your life, I could well understand it. I could almost then consent to your enjoying these indignities you heap upon Him. But since He is the very opposite to all this, since He is your Creator, your best friend, and preserver, how can you make a mock at sin, when you ought most heartily to bewail and lament it?

Polycarp, that blessed Bishop of Smyrna and illustrious successor of the Apostles, was arraigned in his old age before the Proconsul's judgment seat, under the charge of being a worshipper of CHRIST. The fame of his integrity and the respect due to grey hairs had procured him both the friendly feeling of his enemies, bad as they were, and the veneration of the heathen round about. Even the tyrant himself, who had been the first to cite him with a view to his execution, as a criminal, was now most anxious to save him, as innocent. Finding it however quite impossible, by dint of any entreaties, promises, or threatenings, to induce him to recant his Christian profession, he at last made him this proposal; that if, with his tongue, and by no means with his heart, he would, for once only, blaspheme the Name of CHRIST, he should again be restored to his Church, and not only secured from every insult in the way, but sent back laden with costly gifts and presents. On his hearing such a proposal, the venerable old man was overcome with a godly fear. Raising his eyes to heaven, he immediately exclaimed, "Have I served my LORD for eighty-six years, and during all this time has He done me no kind of wrong, but rather bestowed on me numberless

blessings; and how can you now wish me to blaspheme so good a Master?" These were his very words: nor did the nobleness of his conduct at all belie the bravery of what he said; for, while the funeral pile prepared for him was blazing before his eyes, he would suffer no one to unloose his sandals for him, or to take off his upper garments: and so he calmly and leisurely ascended the pile, not so much like a criminal departing this life, as a Phœnix just about to renovate its plumage.

Ah, my beloved Christians, this same GOD—what has He ever merited from you, that you should take such delight in offending Him? Wherefore do you oblige Him to ask by the mouth of Joel, whether you wish to avenge yourself upon Him in return for all He has done for you? *Will you revenge yourselves on Me?* (iii. 4, Vulg.) Pray reflect on what I say. The cheeks of many among you for some time past are become furrowed through age, and their hair turned to snowy white. But can you affirm that during all your past lives GOD has ever treated you ill? Speak your mind freely: speak out. What during these many years has He so much done to incur your displeasure that you can now offer Him this in return, and thus *revenge yourselves* on Him? Did He, forsooth, deserve this of you at the time, when He so tenderly took you out of nothingness to grant you a share in this earthly blessing, this air we breathe, this light we enjoy? Did He deserve it of you at the time, when He caused you to be born into the world of such respected parents? Did He deserve it of you at the time, when having to apportion among so many either the wild woods, or the desert isles, or the perilous sea coast to be their native home, He specially reserved for your benefit a city like this, standing so high in His favour? Did He deserve it of you at the time, when He endowed you with such rare faculties of mind; or, when He prepared for you such honourable employments in life; or when He furnished you with affluence so abundant; or when He blessed you with an offspring so numerous? When, I ask, when did He ever deserve of you this return, this *revenge?* Unless you can tell me this, I am utterly at a loss to comprehend that vast pleasure you take in insulting Him. It is possible no doubt that

during so long a period He may have visited you from time to time with some sickness, or involved you in some trouble. But, should it have been so, be assured He did it in love, and not from any motive of ill-will. He did it with a view to your highest advantage both here and hereafter. "These scourges of the LORD," so spake the wise Judith, "with which we are chastened like servants, have happened for our amendment, and not for our destruction." (viii. 27.) I repeat, therefore, at what particular time was it, ye sinners, that a GOD so exceedingly gracious has deserved of you a return so exceedingly ungracious, as to lead us to infer with this same Judith that you are meditating some such signal act of *revenge?* "Let us not avenge ourselves for these things which we suffer." Methinks—Yes,—I believe I have discovered the precise time, when He deserved this of you. It was the time, when He was content to be crucified naked on a public scaffold for your salvation; the time, when He was content to be goaded with the thorns, stretched by the cords, scarified by the scourges, perforated by the nails—then it was, that He deserved this of you. Can you deny it? Well then; now set to work in the joy of your heart to have your *revenge* upon Him for His having offended you in this manner. "Avenge yourselves"—you have good cause—"Avenge yourselves against the LORD:" for I am far from grudging you such a satisfaction. I have no wish to rob you of so much happiness. Go, I say, go trample upon that Blood, which redeemed you from hell; pollute that Name, which procured your salvation; pour contempt, as you please, upon that LORD, who for your sakes became the reproach of men and the scorn of the nations. Behold Him now mystically present in the midst of us! "Avenge yourselves" therefore now. Let those most Sacred limbs, wounded once for your sins, that head for you pierced, those eyes for you sealed in death, that side for you laid open, that body for you mangled and torn, let all these feel the weight of your avenging hand: for, if by the amazing greatness of all His sufferings endured to save you He caused you such dire offence, you are now justified in obtaining your redress. I therefore again say, "Avenge yourselves against the LORD."

But, if it is on this very account, beyond any other, that you ought to love Him, then what meaneth the delight you have in offending Him? What can you plead this morning in your defence? If I now earnestly request you that on no consideration you will leave this place without having first expressed a cordial hatred of your sins, equal to your former joy, when you revelled in them, will you grant me what I ask? Oh, I implore you by all the pity to be shown to a despised and rejected GOD, sin no more, sin no more against Him: and here at this point let all your excesses find their limit. We will overlook the sins hitherto committed by you, either through the levity of your time of life, or the weakness of your good inclinations, or the rebellion of your carnal lusts, or the temptations of the enemy. Henceforth it would be far too much in us to make an amusement of offending GOD. *Let the time past of our lives*, as S. Peter well exhorts, *let the time past of our lives suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelling, banquetings and abominable idolatries*, (1 S. Pet. iv. 3:) we exclude not the last mentioned sins; for what in fact is every transgression, but, in one way or another, a secret idolatry?

14. In spite of every argument I have used, should some among you be still determined to persist, without any compunction, in offending GOD, I will now bend the knee before such persons, and entreat one favour—a favour I claim of them in consideration of the pains I have taken and the still greater pains I am ready to take in their behalf: that favour is, that they would at least select, as the scene of their offensive wickedness, some spot, where not a symbol should be seen of His Divine bounty towards them to reprove their ingratitude. But where is such a spot to be found? In the rural villas, which GOD keeps so plenteously stored with fruits for your benefit? in the gardens, which GOD keeps so charmingly decorated with flowers for your benefit? in the mountains, which GOD keeps so heavily charged with water for your benefit? in the lowly vales, which GOD keeps so abundantly teeming with corn for your benefit? in the woods, which GOD keeps so numerously stocked with game for your benefit?

in the seas, which God keeps so largely provisioned with fish for your benefit? Whither can you turn your eyes and not behold that Sun, which for your sake shines so brightly; or those Heavens, which for your sake are so untired in their movements? When all at night is dark, through God's goodness there is still the air around you to inhale; and this alone every time you sin is enough to condemn you for your monstrous rebellion and ingratitude. Go where you will, *the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord,* (Ps. cxix. 64)—in other words, there is not a spot on earth left you, on which you may follow your sinful pleasures, unless you can be so very outrageous as to place your happiness in your everywhere doing Him wrong, who places His happiness in His everywhere doing you good.

SERMON XXIX.

ON THE SIN OF HINDERING RELIGION IN OTHERS.

S. John vii. 32.

"The Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers to take Him."

1. Among all the stumblingblocks, that can lie in the path of any person, sincerely desirous of entering upon a religious life, were you to ask me which I think the most dangerous, I should at once answer—the frequent attacks and rude opposition he must expect from those, who are not like-minded with himself. We are much deceived, if we think that there can be an Isaac in the world without his Ishmael, a Jacob without his Esau, a Hannah without her Peninnah, a David without his Shimei, a Mordecai without his Haman, a Jeremiah without his Pashur, and an Elijah without his Jezebel. What do I mean? We are much deceived, if we think a good man can by any possibility pass through this world without having some bad man to persecute him. Did any person ever possess such claims on men's love, as Christ possessed? See His picture in the Gospel. You observe Him invariably occupied in doing the people some good. The ignorant He teaches, the sick He heals, the dead He raises; the demoniacs, whom He delivers from the foul dominion of hell, are without number. Yet, for all this, He is not allowed to live a moment in peace and safety. Why did I say peace and

safety? He is calumniated, He is insulted, He is persecuted; and, forasmuch as He will not voluntarily cease from going about and doing good, they send out this morning their insolent officers to compel Him by taking Him into custody—*The Pharisees and the Chief Priests sent officers to take Him.* So desperate was the wrath conceived against Him by His enemies, by those men, I mean, whose eyes are painfully offended at the sight of goodness when shining too conspicuously in the conduct of their neighbours.

I am not therefore surprised that even here in the centre of Christianity so few are to be found earnestly intent on the work of their perfection. All persons have not CHRIST'S courage in thus holding their ground against whatsoever assaults may reach them: so far from it, the majority consider it will tell much more for their interest, if they keep comfortably close to the main road (though it is the wide road to ruin,) rather than to have to push their way through endless obstacles and annoyances along the more narrow road unto salvation. What then is the course my duty prescribes to me on this occasion? Must I leave these good people in the power of their numerous enemies; leave them to be assaulted and trodden under foot, as if I wanted the spirit to venture a single step in their defence? Certainly not. May GOD rather give me a strength and an eloquence proportionate to the zeal, He has this morning kindled in my bosom! I will hasten then to their relief, and clear the ground of every obstruction to their progress. With this view I shall direct my discourse against a certain class of persons, who, because they have no wish to do what is good themselves, will not allow others to do it, and who, from this feeling, take every opportunity in their way of teasing, unsettling, and persecuting any of their associates, who may be at all seriously inclined. Nor do they desist, until they get him safe in their clutches; until they *take him;* that is to say, oblige him to live, as they do themselves. It must be evident that I could scarcely address you on a subject more important: for to what purpose am I labouring so hard to persuade and encourage you to what is good, if no sooner than I leave the pulpit, another is sure to come

and take equal pains to allure you to what is bad? "When one buildeth and another pulleth down, what profit have they then but labour?" So says Ecclesiasticus (xxxiv. 28.) Favour me therefore with your attention, and pray God to grant me the assistance of His grace.

2. In a case however so atrocious, as the one before me, what rule must be my guide? Viewing the enormity of the sin I have to reprove, I really seem precluded by my subject from using my wonted conciliatory and popular mode of addressing you. My duty would rather be to give the reins to a holy indignation, and so to begin at once frightening and stunning you with my loud invectives. But, as you perceive that my object in preaching is not to display my eloquence, or to spread abroad the fame of my zeal, but solely to do you spiritual good in the best way I can, I shall set aside everything, which at all savours of denunciation. I shall take the physician as my guide, who never reproaches his patient with those past irregularities in his mode of living, which may have caused his complaint—never cries him down and condemns him for this—but simply applies all his mind to cure him; and that by the mildest treatment the case admits of, according to the rules of medicine. I learn from the wise man that, if there be "a tongue, that can cure, it will mitigate and show mercy." (Ecclus. xxxvi. 25, Vulg.)

Tell me then, as we are to discuss this matter amicably together, what extravagant passion is it, my beloved sinners, that arms you so fiercely against that holy and religious life in others, which is so wanting in yourselves? Why are you unable to tolerate it? Open your mind freely; tell me candidly. . . . Is it that the worthy deeds of the righteous man so pain and offend you, that they fail in producing their proper effect on your mind, which is to be a sweet savour? Instead of this, do they disgust you, and prove rather a savour unto death? If this be your reason for ill-treating good men, you are clearly actuated by a feeling of envy.

3. Now for any other species of envy I should be more inclined to absolve you; but this one forms an exception to the rest. It is so infamous, so detestable, that S. Au-

gustine teaches, it is the worst species of them all. For hear the admirable reasoning of that famous Doctor concerning it. If perchance you envy a rich man his bags of money, it does not surprise me; because you have not the power, however you desire it, to amass an equal amount for yourself. The same may be said, if you envy one man his health; another, his personal appearance; another, his natural talent; another, his robust constitution; another, his rank and pedigree. These are advantages quite independent of our own choice; and consequently it is no such great matter, if our natural feeling of envy prompts us to repine, whenever we behold others enjoying what we ourselves are not allowed. But, if you envy another his goodness, what excuse have you then? Is not his goodness something you can acquire for yourself? "If you envy the righteous man," S. Augustine declares, "the remedy is in your own choice. Be that yourself, which you feel sorry that others are. For you have not to purchase at an exorbitant price what you are not, and what another man is. You have it gratuitously, and speedily too." Piety, modesty, charity, temperance, reserve, contrition, are all of them blessings of a kind, that any pauper is quite rich enough to purchase for himself. Nothing is required more than a sincere desire and a resolute will. Is it not then great madness to envy that in another which no human being can prevent you from possessing yourself, ay, and possessing to an equal degree?

There were once upon the earth two pairs of brothers, men of high renown. The City of God claims as its founder the first of these pairs,—I mean Cain and Abel: the city of the world claims as its founder the latter pair,—I mean Romulus and Remus. And it is a remarkable fact that of both these cities it can be truly said that their rising walls were moistened with fraternal blood;[1] in one case with the murder of Abel, and in the other with the murder of Remus. Well, let us for a moment, if you please, exhibit these two murderous brothers, in contrast with each other. Here we have Cain; there we have Romulus. What opinion have you formed of them both? It seems too probable that both,

[1] Fraterno primi maduerunt sanguine muri. *Lucan.* (Lib. i. 95.)

when they died, went down quick into the pit of hell, there to pay the penalty of their misdeeds; there at present they are, both groaning, both bound in chains, both buried in fire. But in this life the same punishment was not assigned them. Cain for many years was an exile and wanderer through the boundless desert. He shuddered at the sight of every savage beast; he turned pale at every rustling of a leaf; he filled the forests with his wailing and howling. Every river he approached seemed to threaten to swallow him down into its abyss, and every valley to bury him in its deep cavities. Grievous to him was the darkness; odious the light of day. His sleep was full of horrors; his vigils were troubled. Like one closely pursued by some fury, lashing him with scourges, he fled, gasping for breath, over the defiles and flinty rocks, uttering, as he went, from his innermost soul that cry of despair; *Every one that findeth me shall slay me.* (Gen. iv. 14.) It was not so with Romulus: far from it. Such was the forbearance and long suffering shown him by heaven, that he passed his whole life in comparative peace and joy. His life was spent in subduing his enemies, triumphing over his competitors, gaining foreigners to his side, suspending the spoils of war in the temples, or planting the standards of victory on the Aventine. Now from whence did it arise that their destinies were so very unlike? Did they not both murder a brother? both, an innocent brother? And did they not both accompany, and thereby aggravate, the guilt of murder by a most disgraceful act of treachery? It is quite true; they did: but still, with that most notable difference I before pointed out. The hatred of Romulus was more excusable than that of Cain; because Romulus envied his brother for his power, whereas Cain envied his for his goodness. It was beyond the power of one to get possession of his brother's power without depriving him of it; but the other could very well possess himself of his brother's goodness without any such deprivation: and therefore the latter, since his conduct was far less excusable, was visited with the severer punishment. "The goodness we have is by no means less"—I borrow the grave and acute observation of S. Augustine, as before adverted to—"The

goodness we have is by no means less, when we have one to share it with us, and to continue so doing: it rather increases in proportion as the charity of the several sharers towards each other is more unanimous." Could not Cain then be righteous, Abel being righteous too? Could not he also offer unto God the first fruits of the garden, the first born of the flock? Could not he also worship the Lord with a like singleness of heart? He could: but the poor wretch would sooner despoil his brother of what he himself had not, than try to procure what his brother had. Therefore let Cain, for the rest of his life, meet with no commiseration. Let him enjoy no rest, no quietness; let him find no mercy; but rather stand exposed before the whole world as a fearful example of the wrath awaiting all, who envy the righteous man on account of his goodness.

But, if this be so, how comes it you do not tremble at the thought, that it is the very same species of envy, which has got the mastery over you; that devilish envy, which prompts bad men to envy good men simply because others are good, and themselves are bad? If you really desire it, are not you able to become quite as holy, as your brother? Can you not observe an equal decorum in your general behaviour? Can you not pray with equal assiduity? Can you not live under an equal self-restraint? Can you not as often, and with equal regularity, receive the Holy Communion? The remedy rests in your own choice. What reason then have you to feel hurt, when you see others far outstripping you in works of charity? And wherefore do you vex, and annoy them, and try to shake their principles on this account?

When, on their return from Babylon, the Jews joined heart and hand in building the walls of their beloved Jerusalem, many, stirred up by a feeling of envy, opposed the good work, and accordingly besieged the men employed, and either actually hindered them from proceeding, or stood by, deriding and insulting them. And so, hear how Nehemiah thundered against them in his petition, *Cover not their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out from before Thy face, because they have mocked Thy builders.* (Neh. iv. 5, Vulg.) But why this terrible denunciation? Why this heavy curse? *Because*

they have mocked Thy builders. Seemeth this to you a trivial matter? Why, it falls nothing short of that enormity, to which all forgiveness is denied, as you see in this petition. My conclusion therefore is: if to let and hinder a mere material building, the like to which we may not be always able to erect, was considered an act of such detestable envy, what must it be to let and hinder a spiritual building, which any person, who likes, may raise for himself on the same plan and on the same elevation?

4. But I am under a mistake. Excuse me. I am now aware that I spake unadvisedly, when I thought you were unable to tolerate goodness in your associates, because of the envy it awakens in you. Such an argument does you too great honour; for it would imply on your part a certain respect for religion; since no one ever envies a good in another, which he does not himself appreciate. But this is not the motive, by which you are actuated. Your desire rather is to find the means of concealing yourself in a crowd. I will explain what I mean. You would fain indulge in all manner of licentiousness; but because this, when it comes in contrast with the strict lives of others about you, would entail upon you such heavy disgrace, you wish all persons to act like yourselves; and hence you are always on the look out to gain proselytes. You would fain give a looser rein to your incontinence; and so you are grieved that others should be chaste. You would fain be more greedy after filthy lucre; and therefore you are displeased that others should be charitable. You would fain be more openly indecent and avowedly profligate; hence you are tormented that others should be modest. But how then? Do you believe that your having many partners in your sins will help to deduct from their magnitude and enormity in the sight of God? You deceive yourselves. "What profits a multitude," so Eucherius well expresses himself on this point, "what profits a multitude, when we shall be all judged one by one?" Never will any wicked person stand excused, because he can allege, "I am not alone;" and, if this truth applies to every kind of sin we commit, how much more, when our partners in sin are all those very individuals,

whom we ourselves once betrayed, and led astray. Think you then that the fact of your having successfully grafted your sin upon others would tell in your favour and render your guilt, after all, not so very serious; as if more respect or less severity ought to be shown to a man suffering from the plague, because he is now no longer the only affected person in the city, but, by his over-free social intercourse, has infected a large portion of the healthy community?

I have much to say about this. Pray attend. You consider yourselves to enjoy more security, while you are living in sins, that are openly and everywhere propagated; and I tell you that this circumstance would ensure your more certain ruin. You have often heard how in the spacious field of the man, described in the Gospel, the bastard tares grew up and multiplied. Rampant and towering aloft they were now making their last crowning effort to choke the choice ears of corn, that were flourishing all around them. Think of their immense folly in this. They would fain occupy the whole field, have all the soil and the fertilizing moisture for their own exclusive use: and they never once dreamed that what they supposed would be the completion of their happiness would really effect their utter misery. Had these tares been at all capable of understanding, I should have remonstrated with them much in this way. "Why, what simpletons you tares are! Don't you see, but for those few ears of corn, whitening close beside you, you would long before now have been all rooted up and exterminated? Oh, how often would the impatient reapers have thrust their sickles into your odious shoots and blossoms! Already you would have been reduced to ashes; for, let me tell you, many are the servants, continually clamouring in their Master's ears against you, *Wilt Thou then that we go?* (S. Matt. xiii. 28)—*go to bind you in bundles and cast you into the fire?* And you, all this while, are striving to usurp more and more upon the wheat, and to get the advantage over it. Go on multiplying, ye wretched tares, and you will soon discover your stupid mistake." After such a manner as this would I have cried aloud in that spacious field, had I not known it to be utterly useless, and like shouting to the wilderness. But

here, in this place, will you not hear me, when I speak so much for your benefit? What then, unhappy sinners, are you about, when you thus earnestly endeavour to make all your associates like yourselves? As so many evil tares, you would corrupt the scanty pure wheat, that is growing up close beside you? And don't you perceive that, in doing this, you will soon bring destruction on your own selves? Know you not how many tongues are perpetually clamouring before the Tribunal of GOD, every day you live, for your utter destruction? Would that I had the power to throw wide open the clouds over your heads, and let you see what is going on beyond them. What then would you see? You would see a formidable host assembled around the Throne of GOD, all those created beings, who are constantly waiting, ready armed "for the revenge of His enemies." (Wisd. v. 18.) And you would see them all, like those impatient reapers, contending with each other in their offers to go first, as the inexorable executioners of the Divine vengeance; all of them demanding with a loud voice, *Wilt Thou then that we go and gather them up?—Wilt Thou that we go?* is the cry of the thunderbolts, that bursting from the clouds we may shatter with an irresistible overthrow yonder benches, where idle people sit publicly talking to Thy dishonour? *Wilt Thou that we go?* is the cry of the whirlwinds, and rushing from our caverns shall we explode with the terrors of an earthquake and raze to the ground these inner chambers, the scenes of so much secret iniquity? *Wilt Thou that we go?* is the cry of the waters, and surmounting our barriers shall we rush with a dire impetuous torrent to drown and desolate those lands, which serve to nourish upon the earth so many reprobates? *Wilt Thou that we go?* is the cry of the flames, and spreading through the streets shall we carry on our fiery invasion to consume those counters, where usury has for such a time and to such an extent triumphed in impunity? *Wilt Thou that we go?* is the simultaneous and reiterated cry in the ears of GOD of those numerous agents of His justice, He has beyond the clouds—*fire, and hail, snow, and vapour, wind and storm, fulfilling His word.* (Ps. cxlviii. 8.) "We," they exclaim, in a noble emulation among themselves, "we will go

forth and act in Thy stead. We will assert Thy honour; we will disperse Thy enemies. Choose Thou from among us: let it either be the thunder, or the lightning, or the hail, or the storm, or the north wind—which of these it most pleases Thee to select—suddenly in a moment shall it depart to root them up out of the earth. We will *gather them up;* we will *gather them up!*" But despite all these cries, God is ever refusing to hear them. He still answers, *Nay*, not so; and He puts up with this enormous insolence of man. He endures all these indignities they heap upon Him. And wherefore does He refuse? Sirs, tell me this: why does He not give them His permission? For no other reason, we know, than this—He is not willing to involve the righteous in the destruction of the ungodly. *Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.* S. Chrysostom confirms this truth—"It is the way with our merciful God to bestow this honour on His servants, that others too for their sakes may be saved." Now, this being the case, how, my fellow sinners, can we ever embrace a notion so erroneous, as to think our state secure, when we have once succeeded in making all around us as bad, as ourselves?

Is it then possible that we can deem it our interest to diminish the number of the few good persons yet remaining to us, not understanding that they are our only support, and that, on their removal, we shall immediately lie exposed to the wrath of God? *Help me,* said no less a Saint than David, *Help me, O Lord, for there is not one godly man* left, (Ps. xii. 1,) so far was he from thinking himself secure, when he stood alone. What else caused the destruction of Sodom, but the failure of ten righteous men, as God revealed it to Abraham? What else caused the overthrow of Jerusalem, than the want of a single faithful man, as God showed it to Jeremiah? But, on the other hand, look at that ship and its ungodly crew, with whom the Apostle traversed the seas. Although for many days it had been tost about by the tempestuous winds, imperilled, given up for lost, actually shipwrecked on the coast of Malta, yet we know that not one of its passengers, however bad his character, perished—and their number amounted to near three hundred—because God had given all

their lives to a single holy man, who made the voyage in their company; *Fear not, Paul—God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.* (Acts xxvii. 24.) Can any one, after this, be so blind, as not to see that the wicked have nothing they should more fondly desire than to have an increasing number of the good? Really they ought to preserve them at any price; they ought to watch over them with the utmost concern; they ought to guard them with the most anxious care. They ought to set a high value upon their goodness, and to estimate it, as they would their own happiness; unless they are bold enough to contradict the wise man's saying, *When just men increase the people shall rejoice.* (Prov. xxix. 2, Vulg.) And, forsooth, people now-a-days must be acting on the reverse of this principle, and, instead of tenderly cherishing the few surviving good Christians in the land, must be for getting rid of them! What kind of an hostility is this! Oh, the madness, the barbarity of it! Take good heed therefore, ye associates in wickedness. Mind, how I make your own abandoned argument to recoil on yourselves. Because you are bad, you cannot endure that others should be good: and I say unto you, that, because you are bad, you ought on this very account to desire and even contrive that others should be good.

5. And listen again, for I have not yet told you the best of it. You intend, either to continue in the same course of sin, (as, in order to impress my subject, I have pre-supposed,) or you desire to reflect seriously at some future day, to repent, and so to begin cultivating that goodness in yourself, which now you are persecuting in others. Supposing you intend to continue in the same course of sin, then I have nothing to say to you. In that case, however, what brings you here? Away, depart! Retire from this honoured assembly; for this is no place for a sworn vassal of the devil; and so long as you are here keeping us company, we are all in danger of perishing because of you. But allowing, which is indeed most credible, that none among you has so utterly corrupted his principles, as to determine upon a life of obstinate wickedness; allowing that you are all equally disposed to amend your ways, at all events when you get in years,

how can you calculate on receiving any special favour from God, in a matter so concerning you, after you have given Him such infinite offence?

The serpent—mark my words—the serpent, for its having acted in the capacity of the devil's servant, when it corrupted Eve in yonder earthly Paradise, so immediately incurred the extreme displeasure and utter abhorrence of God, that the penal sentence, intended for all mortal creatures, was first launched against it in particular. It was cursed above every beast, ever born into this world, and, as the vilest of them all, was condemned to live under ground, to feed on dust, and, for its everlasting infamy, to drag its belly along the ground. Now, let me inquire, what offence had this ill-starred serpent committed in the work he did for Satan? Think the matter over. Had it engaged itself in this service willingly? Was this its own device and option? So far from it, it had been forced to submit to a power far stronger than its own. It was the power of the devil, that obliged it to open its mouth, to move its tongue, and to articulate words, the meaning of which it could not understand. And yet its freedom from blame thus far was of no service to it. Why so? Because, as S. Chrysostom puts it, God on this occasion acted the part of a father. How, think you, does a father behave, when some assassin has murdered his two dear children? He is not satisfied with venting his feelings merely against the person of the assassin: in addition to this, he raves in his fury against the weapon, which was the instrument of the fatal blow; he dashes it on the earth, he stamps it under his feet; he tears, he twists, he curses it, he scowls at it, as though it were the guilty author of the deed. God in a like manner, observes S. Chrysostom, expressed His indignation. "As the serpent," (how admirable is the language!) "as the serpent, like a sword, was the slave to Satan's maliciousness, therefore to it also an everlasting punishment was assigned." Be it so. Listen then how fearfully I shall employ this fact in the accusation I bring against you.

If one, who has confessedly done the devil some service, as an instrument in tempting the good, an instrument, however,

not acting voluntarily, but under compulsion—an instrument moreover unconscious, by necessity, of what he was about—has yet been unable to escape a very severe punishment, but has incurred the high displeasure and abhorrence of God; if, under such circumstances, this took place, then please to say—and forgive the boldness of my speech—what will be your fate, who, of your own accord and with malice prepense, have assisted the devil in such a base undertaking, and have even stooped to be his spokesmen and interpreters in his attempts at gaining converts? Are you the people to presume upon being pitied?—you, to be compassioned?—you, to be forgiven? Cursed is he, who acts like the serpent; the more rational he is, so much the worse for him. He is accursed. "The man is the devil's agent." (S. Chrysostom.) Go your way then, and from that devil, whom you have so faithfully served, expect your payment. I promise you no wages at the hands of God; none but disgust, misery, death, and damnation.

6. By what other course of conduct could you have more openly declined to hold any terms of friendship with God, than by this of siding with His enemy?—siding did I say? rather supplying His enemy with the most effectual weapons of waging war against heaven? Every one, my dear Sirs, will readily grant, that the devil, when left alone in his attacks, can effect but little. *Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.* (S. James iv. 7.) He will not merely leave you, but he will *flee from you;* in himself he is such a coward. Then it is that he becomes formidable, when he has some man, some woman, to stand by and assist him. His character too is that of a traitor; and therefore he mightily prevails, whenever he can use a borrowed mantle: for who (as Job speaks on this subject) *who can discover the face of his garment?* (xli. 4,) so cleverly can he hide himself in its foldings. Hence we see that the patience of this same Job never failed him, so long as the wicked one, acting singly against him, either destroyed his lands, or plundered his cattle, or overthrew his dwellings, or slew his sons, or ulcerated his body; but, when he addressed him by the mouth of his friends, and tempted him to distrust God, then his patience failed. . . . . Mark

therefore my words. It would be better for us that God should open wide all the prison gates of hell, let loose all the devils, give them full permission to unite their forces and to attack the righteous man with all their temptations—this, I say, would be better for us—because in this case, seeing our danger, we should at once seek and secure a timely shelter. But when, under the mask of a hypocritical friendship, you try to beguile the righteous into sin, *to dig a pit for your friend,* (Job vi. 27,) what probability remains of his escaping you? As you are thus doing the devil's work for him more successfully than he could do it in his own person, are you to expect any forgiveness from God, as you might do, did your sins result from common human frailty? It cannot be. It is impossible. For, if no good action pleases God more than our working together with Him to save souls, no crime we can commit is more odious in His sight than our helping to destroy them. We are taught by the Schoolmen that contraries hold good in their respective consequences; and therefore, if to convert another is, of all Divine works, the most Divine, then to pervert another is likely to be universally branded, as being of all devilish works the most devilish. Surely this is nothing short of casting our lot among those crafty fowlers, of whom the Lord so bitterly complained by the mouth of Jeremiah; *For among My people are found wicked men, they lay wait as he that setteth snares, they set a trap, they catch men.* (v. 26.) Ah, ye bird-catchers of hell! Excuse me, if I call you by your proper name. How is it that you are yet insensible of the enormity of such practices? Our common fowlers indeed unpeople the air: you make Heaven desolate; you deprive Angels and Saints of their companions; you rob Christ of souls. And have you no misgiving? and are you not in great fear? and do you fancy you are doing no harm? Oh, the immensity of that harm! Words cannot describe it.

7. For, tell me; is it not probable, that, among the multitudes you have led astray, some one may at last destroy his soul, and perish? The blame will lie at your door. And should this happen, who is to restore to Christ the poor soul snatched from Him? Who is to do this? Have you a sum

at hand sufficient to give Him satisfaction? If so, where is it? Produce it, count it, see that it is right: or, at least, give us some means of ascertaining this point for you. You know not the costly price paid for that soul by the innocent Son of God—how much He laboured, how hard He suffered, in order to Redeem it. Ah, my injured Redeemer, why didst Thou descend from Heaven in Thy Divine person, and put on our poor vile suffering flesh, and endure hunger, and thirst, and cold, and heat, and stripes, and chains, and blows and beatings, and allow Thyself to be fixed naked on the accursed tree—and all to save souls? To what purpose was this? Why was it? We worms, vilest worms of the earth, as we are, make a point of frustrating the blessed effects of Thy wondrous Redemption. We with our words, we with our actions, we with our corrupt examples labour diligently to consign to hell the souls Thou hast saved. Ye heavens, shoot out your arrows! for this is a wickedness not to be calmly borne with. Here let the tempests in all their horrors be launched; hither let the whirlwinds of vengeance come and discharge themselves: for this we deserve. To rob a soul from Christ, which He bought with His own Blood—and to rob it with a view of consigning it to the devil! Can anything be conceived more impious, more barbarous, more inhumanly savage—I will say—more diabolical?

Were you, my hearers, to observe some person entering a Church on the solemn Festival of Easter, and proceeding at once to lay violent hands upon the Altar with all its most beautiful decorations, tearing its handsome coverings, plundering and scattering about its Holy vessels and Sacred furniture, what would your mind prompt you to do? Would you not rush forward and cry aloud, "Seize the wretch, don't spare him, give it him well;" and would you not by main force and with every anathema expel him out of the Church? Listen then: go and attack yonder Altar; despoil Christ of all the most splendid ornaments He possesses upon it; ay, take sword, take fire, and reduce them all to ashes and utter destruction. For it would cost Him far less to bear the entire loss of them all, than the loss of one single of His servants. The purchase, which He made with His precious

Blood, was not the marble, neither was it the scarlet, neither was it the gold: He bought souls; *Thou hast redeemed us with Thy blood,* (Rev. v. 9:) it is not here said *ours,* but *us.* And on what principle would you have Him feel less aggrieved by the man, who robs Him of a soul, than by the man, who robs Him of a chalice or paten?

I stated at first my unwillingness to express myself in those strong terms and with that fiery zeal, which the occasion would fully justify; but I am now come nearer the truth, when I plainly tell you this arose from my not being able to find terms strong enough to denounce such superlative wickedness. If I denounce it, as impiety, this is saying little: if I condemn it, as sacrilege, this does not reach the mark. I must needs forge an entirely new vocabulary, before I can describe the abhorrence it causes me. But is not this something desperate? We are come to this—and to a worse state we can scarcely come—that the power of language is no longer found adequate to represent the atrociousness of the sins, which are now being committed among us.

The Second Part.

8. Tell me now, my brethren, the honest truth: discourse, as we may, can we ever sufficiently condemn the sin I would here reprove? "It is not possible," you will answer; "but then such a sin is not to be found among us. Who here ever tries to ensnare the goodness of other people, or to infect their purity, or knowingly to rob Christ of His disciples? We are Christians; we are not Christ's persecutors." Not so fast, not so fast, my hearers; keep your tempers: for I perceive already from the peremptoriness of your answer, that I shall be obliged either to give you serious offence, or to allow that what I have said has been all in vain. Still, sooner than offend you, I will cheerfully bear any censure. But if, to exculpate yourselves, you can advance no more than this, that you are Christians, believe me, this plea, so far from clearing you, will rather aggravate your case. For the most bitter persecutions, which Christ now-a-days re-

ceives, come from Christians. Hear how many years ago S. Bernard began in his time to deplore this fact. "Those, who are dear to Thee and nearest to Thee, O LORD, have arisen and stood up against Thee. The entire body of the Christian community from the highest down to the lowest appear to have conspired against Thee. From the sole of the foot unto the head there is no health in it. Alas, Alas! when they, LORD, who seem to aspire to the highest dignities and authority in Thy Church, are the first to persecute Thee."

I know perfectly well that this rebuke applies not to our own city, so far as its men in authority are concerned; for I believe them to be all zealously intent upon the suppression of vice and the promotion of virtue. But I speak to you generally, to the mass of hearers congregated before me; and I ask, does your conscience never once reproach you for having brought ridicule or discredit on some one of your own station in life, because, for so young a man, he seemed to be assuming the gravity of advanced years, because he showed no favour to your gay parties, no taste for your amusements; but preferred finding his recreation either in the Church by conversing with GOD, or in the cloister by conversing about GOD? Come, answer now this question. Are you quite sure that no individual has by your means left off receiving the Sacrament so frequently, attending the Church Services so reverently, performing his religious exercises so devoutly and become less diligent in those duties, to which his education or turn of mind had before so attached him? May Heaven witness how earnestly I desire to believe the very best of you; but may Heaven also forbid your ever being one of those, so vividly described in the Book of Wisdom, who, when they behold young persons of a more devout and serious character associating together, taunt them by such remarks as these: "What a bore your life must be! How melancholy! How chilling! Come then along with us; let us enjoy together these pleasures, which, when we grow older, will be placed beyond our reach;" "Come on therefore; let us enjoy the good things, that are present; and let us speedily use the creatures, like as in youth; let us fill ourselves with

costly wine and ointments, and let no flower of the spring pass by us, let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered, let none of us go without his part of our voluptuousness, let us leave tokens of our joyfulness in every place." (Wisd. ii. 6—9.) *Let us all have one purse.* (Prov. i. 14.) Let us spend all our time in merry feasts and gay revelries, and never trouble our brains so about that upper world yonder, from which, after all, nobody has ever yet returned to give us intelligence; for "no man was known to have returned from the grave." (Wisdom ii. 1.) Heaven forbid, I repeat, that any of you should ever offer advice so pernicious to tender inexperienced youth; that you should ever with this view allure them to obscene theatrical representations and licentious songs; that you should ever ridicule the Manual of Devotion you may see in their hands, and offer them, instead, to read, the amorous sighs of Aminta, the memoirs of Lincus, the ravings of Celia; thus exposing them to the influence of that viper, who lurks in fair and flowery places, whose insidious bite will instil poison unawares into their souls. Is there not a cause for my saying this? Don't you see that, when once a zealous preacher proposes a reform of some particular abuse—for instance, when he advises females to appear with less transparent veils over their shoulders, when he reminds the magistrates to close the theatres during Lent, when he recommends that, in future, all smiling and gossiping, all glances, and intrigues, and assignations should be expelled from our Churches—when once, I say, some zealous Apostolical preacher raises a serious voice against such practices, then men are always at hand to confront him. They plead for those abuses, they defend those customs, and banding together against all, who are zealous in promoting the public welfare, they say, with those bold offenders, described, like the former class, in the same Book of Wisdom, Come, "let us lie in wait for the righteous, because he is not for our turn, and he is clean contrary to our doing; he upbraideth us with our offending the law and objecteth to our infamy the transgressings of our education. He is made to reprove our thoughts." (ii. 12—14.) How many too are there in our time, who succeed in lowering the proper sense of

virtue by giving it a reproachful name; calling bashfulness, want of manners; chastity, a chill in the blood; a wish for peace, cowardice; and then, stigmatizing frugality and forbearance, as signs of a penurious and unmanly character. *They call evil good and good evil.* (Isa. v. 20.) How many are there, who, on beholding a David resolved in his mind to pity Saul, intercept him, and move him to take his revenge. (1 Sam. xxiv.) How many, on beholding an Ahasuerus unjustly incensed against Vashti, step in with their arguments, and advise him to banish her from the marriage bed. (Esther i.) How many, when they observe an Amnon raving with incestuous love for Tamar, approve of it, and prescribe to him the way fully to gratify his lust. (2 Sam. xiii.)

In what words shall I speak of those, who either by compulsion or by cunning deter others from that decided religious life, to which God is calling them; who, to give them a relish for the world, allow them, young as they are, to follow their own way, and, under the colour of putting the truth of their calling to the test, flatter them, caress them, entertain them with fair promises, and say everything imaginable to make them dislike a strictly religious life. Can you presume to deny that any such characters are to be found among you, that there are none such in this city, otherwise so devout? none in this assembly, otherwise so well conducted? Would God it were so! For this I would cheerfully spend all the blood in my veins. But, if this is not so, if what I suspect is true, why refuse me the liberty to express what I feel about it? Would you then stop my mouth, as if my speaking were utterly useless, as if I had no reason for making all this stir and ado? As long as my life is spared, nothing shall ever prevent my denouncing a sin like this: nothing shall prevent me from telling you the plain unvarnished truth. *Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked, I will make a wailing like the dragons and mourning as the owls.* (Micah i. 8.) For it is to me quite inconceivable how any persons in direct contradiction to those laws, both human and Divine, which all oblige us earnestly to promote what is good, should rather do their best to defeat their object. Only think. If you saw your declared

enemy in evident danger of bringing himself to hell, you ought, forgetting all past injuries, at once in a kind forgiving spirit to try to replace him in the way to heaven; otherwise, you would treat him worse than a brute beast, when fallen in a ditch, to whom you would surely extend a helping hand. And you reverse this; and precisely because you see another in the way to heaven would by your snares, intimidations, and allurements, endeavour, as though he were your enemy, to expose him to the danger of perishing in hell.

An unjust man, says Solomon, *alluretb his friend, and leadeth him into the way that is not good.* (Prov. xvi. 29, Vulg.) Had Solomon said *his enemy,* I could understand him; but *he alluretb his friend.* Oh, what a terrible thing! What could ever induce you, O Christians, to behave so madly? and how is it, if deaf to all the appeals of your conscience you are not by the common feelings of humanity deterred from such wickedness? It does indeed put me to shame to address you in this manner; it grieves me to do so: yet speak I must, and so conclude. Have we no inclination whatever to serve God? Well; we will not then serve Him. Have we no relish for Paradise? Let Him then keep it to Himself. Does hell put us in no trepidation? Down into hell then let us sink. Are we resolutely bent on destroying ourselves? Be it so; and let us be destroyed. Why need any delay? Open thy mouth, O earth, to embrace in thy bosom the soul destined to be thine! But at least "let our own individual damnation suffice us." So in deep sorrow I must say with S. Gregory; "Let it be enough that we ruin our own souls; nor let us, in addition, seek to ruin the souls of others. My most beloved brethren, could I demand of you less than this? I do not require you to be as religious as some others are, to equal them in patience, self-controul, heavenly-mindedness. I simply ask you to allow your associate without your molesting to become what he desires. *Oh, ye house of Israel, let it suffice you of all your abominations:* this is what God demands of you by the mouth of Ezekiel. (xliv. 6.) Let your own abominations suffice you. Is this raising too high a demand? Does such a prayer need to be pleaded with tears and vehement importunities? I will no longer do

you wrong by making any such entreaties. I rather take comfort in the reflection that for the future, you will allow the fullest liberty to all about you in their religious pursuits and inquiries; yea, more, that you will be moved and incited yourselves by their good examples to a life of devotedness to GOD. In this you will make it quite evident that, if ever you treated these persons differently, you did it from carelessness, and not from the malice of a perverted will.

SERMON XXX.

AN EXPOSURE OF THE WORLD'S TREACHERY.

S. John vii. 7.

"I testify of it that the works thereof are evil."

1. If in a well ordered commonwealth handsome rewards and noble tributes of gratitude are usually given to any class of persons, it is surely to those, who discover a traitor. Ahasuerus, the famous king of Asia, whose sceptre swayed one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, advanced, it is well known, to Royal dignities that Mordecai, by whose means he became acquainted with the treacherous designs of Bigthana and Teresh, two noble chamberlains of his palace. Tiberius rewarded Antonia the wife of Drusus, who revealed to him the plot devised against him by Sejanus. Pyrrhus rewarded Phænarete wife of Samon, who revealed to him the plot devised against him by Neoptolemus; and Crœsus, either to express his thanks or to recommend a good example, raised a golden statue, afterwards placed by him in the temple of Delphos, to a common soldier, who discovered the trap laid for him by his mother-in-law. I have therefore good ground this morning to expect some substantial token of your gratitude, as I come here with the sole design of unmasking to your view an arch-traitor. And who is he? Whoever he be, let him find no mercy. Condemn him, strip him, expose him to the gaze of the multitude. I will inform you, who this same traitor is. I much fear, however, you will not

believe what I tell you; for many among you are already with him on such friendly terms, as to be more disposed to take his part, stand up in his defence, and perhaps go the length of charging me with doing him a great injustice: so far shall I be from finding any inclination among you to thank and to reward me for my services. But really I am doing him no injustice at all. He is a declared traitor, a most unmistakeable traitor; for he bears all the marks of that character: and woe be to the man, who will not take heed, and guard against him!

The traitor I speak of is the world. And have I not a cause? Let CHRIST our Redeemer decide the question, who came to this earth expressly to reveal to man a fact of so great truth and importance. He said, *I testify of the world that the works thereof are evil.* Now what possible reason could have existed for a testimony so illustrious, had the *evil* of these *works* been known already to mankind? There are thousands, who, from ignorance of this truth, place implicit confidence in the world, worship it, cleave to it, and every day of their lives become more devoted to its service. And is it your wish to belong to this class? Oh, could I now disclose its many artful devices, and explain its practices to you, you would certainly all be of S. Paul's opinion. He formed the habit, as he tells us himself, of paying no more regard to the world, than he would pay to a malefactor, nailed to a cross. *The world is crucified to me.* (Gal. vi. 14.) Should you however not be able to travel so far with the Apostle, yet at the least I would have you make up your minds not to love the world, not to be on such friendly terms with it, not to give it your confidence. This is what, under all circumstances, I must claim at your hands; and, would you be convinced of the justice of my claim, please to attend.

2. First, my hearers, confess the strong inclination you feel to serve the world. Is not this the case? Here then let us fix our inquiry. And what is that quality in the world, which disposes and decides you to serve it? Perhaps the promises it offers, all so rich, so munificent, and in such perfect harmony with your taste? This must be it.

The world promises you pleasures, it promises you riches, it promises you honours: these are advantages, which mortals naturally covet, which we pursue with a desperate fondness exceeding that, which the bears show for honey, the hart for the waterbrook, and the silly insect for the candle. No wonder, then, you are so ready to listen to the world's proposals. But Oh, the delusion! How is it that your eyes are not open at once to detect the imposture? This same wondrous condescension the world shows you—mark what I affirm—this condescension ought to be the very thing to furnish you with clear, certain, and infallible evidence of the world's hereby declaring itself to be a traitor. Every traitor manages to creep into people's favour by offering them something agreeable to the senses. Who is so ignorant, as not to know this? Cain betrayed Abel by proposing to him a ramble into the woods; *Let us go forth abroad.* (Gen. iv. 8, Vulg.) Jael betrayed Sisera by inviting him to an idle repose. Delilah betrayed Samson by inviting him to a fond endearment. Tryphon betrayed Jonathan by giving him at first an honourable reception, (1 Macc. xii.:) instances to the same purport are innumerable. "The chief business of a deceiver is, to offer first what pleases, that he may inflict afterwards what pains." This was the remark of S. Chrysostom. Therefore, as long as the world so indulgently panders to our natural, and even our corrupt and inordinate lusts, is it not quite certain that it is not treating us fairly and handsomely; unless you are prepared to give those Lamiæ credit for sincerity, who bared their bosoms to the passer-by, inviting him to taste the milk, and then dashed out his brains? *My son, if sinners entice thee*—this is the good advice of Solomon—*if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* (Prov. i. 10.)

3. And, to say the truth, have you ever seriously inquired into the nature of those gifts, the world so very profusely offers you? You certainly must regard them, as being vastly considerable; and yet they are all mere illusion—apparent gifts, but real injuries. For this reason, they were compared by some to the apple of our first parents; by others, to the apple of Eudocia; by others, to the apple

of Paris—all gifts, full of death and destruction. I would however compare them, as may be better done, to another gift; one of an apple too, and that most fatal. I refer to the manner, in which Kennethus King of Scotland was miserably tricked and injured. This Prince for his amusement went one day into the delightful garden of the palace, when his attention was arrested by a statue, that exceeded the rest in height and grandeur, as it stood before him in the attitude of presenting him with a golden apple. The King, not in the least suspecting any imposture, reached out his hand, and, from the facility he had acquired by long habit of receiving all sorts of presents from all sorts of persons, confidently expected that the statue, though a block of marble, might yet have something to give him. But how dearly did he pay for his confidence! For instantly, together with the golden apple, leaped forward a dart of the keenest edge, which the figure kept in its left hand always ready for execution. It did not allow the King a moment to foresee his danger and to avert it, but at once struck him dead. Just like this are those gifts, which the world hands over to its votaries. Damascene states it plainly; "This is the nature of the world's advantages and gifts. It lays traps in the path of all, who seek its enjoyments." True. Its votaries have their pleasures, and with them every means to satisfy their lusts—and Oh, what a lovely apple is here! But, soon after, with these pleasures are combined tedious debilities and pains in the body, internal derangements, external sores, such as confine them perpetually to the sick chamber—there behold the dart! Its votaries have their riches, with them to make ample provision for an easy luxurious life. Oh, what a lovely apple is here! But, soon after, with their riches are combined the harassing cares of trade, of negociations, of lawsuits, of bankruptcies, such as condemn them to a life of constant disquietude—And there behold the dart! Its votaries have their honours, with which to blazon forth in public their fine titles—Oh, what a lovely apple is here! But, soon after, with their honours are combined a thousand rival animosities in matters of precedence, of pedigree, of Court-intrigue, of State affairs, such as condemn them to a life of endless contention—And there

behold the dart! In a word, *the whole world lieth in wickedness*, (1 S. John v. 19,) as S. John affirmed. The world is built upon evil, according to S. Cyprian's description; "It smiles, that it may rage; it fondles, that it may deceive; it allures, that it may kill."

And are you still undecided? Can't you yet make up your mind? Are additional proofs needed to convince you of the world's treachery? To what purpose are the good things it pours into your lap, if found to be replete with cares, replete with mischief; such good things, as have the mere appearance and shadow of what is good—such, as in the Book of Wisdom, were called the froth of the sea, because they are so bitter; such, as were regarded by a S. James, as a vapour of the air, because they are so empty; such, as were esteemed by a David, as straw upon the house top, because they are so soon withered; such, as by Solomon, who knew them all but too intimately, were pronounced to be, nothing after all but *vanity and vexation of spirit*, (Eccl. i. 14;) or, as the Arabic version has it, "a straitness of spirit;" or, as the Chaldee reads it, "a wear of the spirit;" or, as the Syriac, "the troubling of the spirit;" or as Vatablus, "a breaking down of the spirit;" or, as S. Jerome with Theodotion and with Symmachus interpret it, "a feeding upon the wind?" We learn from this last striking figure that he who expects to satisfy his hunger with such good things, is simply nourishing himself with so much wind; a sort of food, which, while it fails to impart strength, breeds inward disquietude, produces convulsions, causes the most excruciating pains. Of a man starving on this food, Job says, *In the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits, he shall burn, and every sorrow shall fall upon him.* (xx. 22, Vulg.) And will you be such an arrant fool, as to offer your services to the world, because it promises you an abundance of good things like these? Oh, what folly! Oh, what rashness! Oh, what fatuity! Was not Isaiah quite right, when he pressed this question upon you, *Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?* (lv. 2.)

4. And Oh, how properly does he add, *which satisfieth not!*

For, supposing the advantages we have specified, false and counterfeit, as they are, to be nevertheless desirable, still what is our hope? That the world will ever bestow them upon us so as fully to satisfy our desires? A hope like this only shows your little knowledge in the matter. It will bestow them upon the same principle that water was once doled out during a siege to the inhabitants of Bethulia; that is to say, by a scanty and limited allowance. If, however, on any occasion it should open its hand liberally, it will withdraw it on the first opportunity. For you must know that with all its care, like a shrewd man of business, to maintain a good credit, the world is a bankrupt; it has no such amount of capital, as to be able at one and the same time to answer the demand of its numerous claimants. How then does this traitor escape the difficulty? In order to give to one, who happens to be the most troublesome and importunate, it takes away from some other; nor, search, as you may, will you ever find it has enriched one person except by impoverishing another; ever advanced one without depressing another.

When Samson found himself bound to pay the thirty changes of raiment, he had promised at the marriage feast to the expounders of his famous riddle, what did he do to get them? He went down to Askelon, and there stripped thirty men, whom he put to death; *he took the spoil, and gave changes of garments unto them which expounded the riddle.* (Judg. xiv. 19.) The world manages its affairs much in the same way. There is no readier means for it to clothe one person than by denuding another. It presents Mordecai with the administration of a noble Monarchy; but it gives it him by first taking it away from Haman. It inducts Ziba into the possession of an extensive property; but it does it by first taking it from Mephibosheth. It institutes Zadoc to a glorious Priesthood; but it does it by first taking it from Abiathar. And so we may go on, quoting examples to the same effect: and the conclusion we come to is this—that the world acts very like those gardeners, who being obliged to supply a fountain, for the amusement of certain foreigners, curious to see the waterworks, do it by turning the cock and raising the supply they want by cunningly defrauding some

other fountain. How then can you repose any confidence in the world? When you least expect it, with the utmost facility it will disappoint you; often, too, that it may enrich, out of your property, some far less deserving object, some flatterer, some pushing person, some informer, some one, who contrives to raise himself by those crooked and round-about ways, which ought in truth to be the longest, but yet are too frequently found in the world the most expeditious.

5. More however is yet to be said. For, if the world would only forewarn you in time of the mischief it was forced to do you, it might perhaps be somewhat excused. But the worst of it is, that, in the character of a thorough traitor, it loves to attack you quite by surprise and to fail you, as we say, just at the nick of time; I mean, the time of your fullest prosperity, or of your most urgent need. The prophet Jonah sought for rest under the shelter of a fresh verdant gourd, which having gently sprouted over his head, made him a most luxurious rural arbour. But what good came of it? When, over-joyed with this, the poor man thought of reclining under its shade—for he was *exceeding glad of the gourd*, (iv. 6,)—the plant, all of a sudden, withered away, and he was left naked and exposed to the strokes of the raging mid-day sun. And, could I but enumerate, one after another, the many instances, in which men have been imposed upon by this deceitful world, Oh, the fine gourds—and even the grand laurels too—I should have to set before you all of them of a sudden dried up over their heads!

Titus Celsus, from being a private soldier in Africa, was, through the interest chiefly of two powerful men, Pomponianus and Possienus, raised by the acclamations of the army to be Emperor. Yet, can we believe it? Scarcely had seven days elapsed since his accession to power, than, the scene suddenly shifting, he was put to death by these very persons, who had promoted him, his only fault being his over-confidence in the popular favour. Thus Galba, thus Otho, thus Vitellius, thus Emilianus, thus Pertinax, thus Florian, thus Tacitus, thus Numerianus, did not enjoy the Imperial power beyond the space of a single year; the sceptre, to their no small discredit, slipping out of their hands, just at the time,

when they flattered themselves they were grasping it with most tenacity. How much to be pitied was Jovianus! A more religious, a more discreet, a more benevolent prince the earth could never hope to see. On his being saluted Emperor by the people, he immediately went to Constantinople, there to assume the reins of government, when on his journey he had to sleep in a room, that had been newly whitewashed; this sufficed to cause his death during the night; for he was suffocated by the vapours of the charcoal, kept burning on the preceding day to dry the room. Valerian contrived to reign a little longer; but what good did it do him, when he found himself reduced by necessity to the slavish office of becoming a footstool to Sapor, the king of Persia, as he proudly mounted his charger? Those four kings too—I want some one to remind me of their names—were able to retain their power for a somewhat longer period: but what good did it do them, when, taken prisoners soon after by Sesostris King of Egypt, they were compelled to act as his carriage-horses, when he made his pompous appearance in the triumphal car? So true is the fact; no height of Majesty has been exempted from any, even the greatest ridicule.

Examples might here be adduced without end. History is full of them; hence S. Chrysostom felt no scruple in declaring that not a single earthly enjoyment contains any substance—"nothing firm, nothing stable"—but contrarywise that it will dry up, like a deceitful stream, just at the time when one, like Elijah, has contrived with great difficulty to reach its banks, there to rest oneself in peace, and to spend one's remaining days under the cool tranquillizing influence of its fresh air and its gentle murmurs. *We looked for peace, and behold trouble.* (Jer. xiv. 19.) Was I wrong then, my hearers, in telling you that the world fails us just at the nick of time, that it fails us at our prime, that it fails us at our zenith; or, to borrow the words of the blessed Peter Damian, that "it troubles those soonest, whom it flatters." Oh, its guile! Oh, its double dealing! Oh, its treachery! If this be not to act a traitor's part, what is? Why, the world seems in my view of it to be another Vesuvius: it favours the wish

you have to cultivate its lower grounds by offering you harvests full of joy, with genial springs, fine autumns, and never failing plenty. But what of this? At such an hour as you least apprehend, from its innermost entrails it rains down such an awfully destructive flood of sulphur, bitumen, ashes, and stones, that the entire produce of a series of past years is clean swept away. "The affliction of an hour"—how suited is the language of the Preacher!—"maketh a man forget pleasure." (xi. 27.) And have you a mind still to fix your habitation at the foot of this treacherous Vesuvius, there to reside, there to live at your ease? Isaiah, having predicted the calamities of Babylon declared that henceforth the Arabs would have no wish to station themselves on that spot; *neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there,* (xiii. 20;) that the shepherds would no more lead their flocks for repose to that situation; that the ploughmen would no more return thither, as to a place suited to their labours. And you would not only pitch your tent, but even raise up on high your palaces in this world. No, no, my brethren: *Flee out of the midst of Babylon and deliver every man his soul.* (Jer. li. 6.) For the land before you is not as you suppose, your friend; no; 'tis a land of assassins.

6. I understand the reason, why your minds are so easily dazzled by the world. Those melancholy reverses, that I told you we must expect in it, are invariably ascribed to any other cause, than its own intrinsic treachery. Such a one died quite young, it is true; but then it was owing to his intemperance and the little care he took of his health. Another lost his popularity; but then it was owing to his indiscreet way of talking. Another lost all his money; but then it was owing to his reckless manner in business. Another was deserted by his friends; but then it was owing to his not making himself more amiable. Thus the world will never admit that those reverses, which overtake its votaries, have arisen from any want, on its part, of fidelity towards them, as though it were the guilty person; but from some want, on their part, of attention to their own interests, as though they were the most imprudent among men. And yet does not this very fact show more clearly its perfidy? Traitors study

nothing so much, as they do secresy. Every trick and every practice of theirs turns on this point: for, were they once to allow themselves guilty of any damage inflicted, who would ever trust them for the future? Few behave with the openness of that great captain Joab, who, after he had most basely and treacherously murdered two valiant warriors Abner and Amasa, plumed himself for this achievement to such a degree, that he quite enamelled his proud military girdle with their blood. *He put the blood of war upon his girdle.* (1 Kings ii, 5.) Traitors, for the most part, don't do this: they generally let fly the dart, and then run away to cover: if questioned, they deny; if convicted, they swear to a falsehood: and, if they find it beyond their power to conceal what they have done, they have a thousand subterfuges at hand to serve their ends; as we read in the Book of Proverbs, *The man that deceiveth his neighbour and saith, Am I not in sport?* (xxvi. 19.) What wonder then is it that the world should never be without some new pretext or another, to colour over its impostures? But these are mere pretexts, my hearers; and therefore I again urge you to place no trust in them. Hate rather and abhor them, and never believe, however devotedly you may engage in the service of the world and strictly observe its orders and maxims, that it will ever treat you better, for all your pains, than it has done other people before you. No; would you prevail upon the world to show you any kind of respect, you must treat it in quite a contrary way. You must show it no respect; you must tread and trample it under foot; you must pay no manner of regard to its smiles. By how much more persons desperately cling to it, by so much more sooner or later will it ill treat them; and they will verify in their persons the remark of Damascene, that the world hates that man, who attaches to it the highest value. "The world is an adversary to its friends."

7. It is indeed a most extraordinary fact, but quite true. If ever the world suffered ill usage from any particular class of persons, who were they? They were good and holy men. These were the persons to fall foul of it, to censure it both in their speeches and writings, to make a mock of all its offers of pleasures, riches, honours, and every other kind of temporal

prosperity. And yet these are the very persons, whom the world now honours with its remembrance. *The memory of the just is blessed.* (Prov. x. 7.) The world has known more than one Alessius, whom it constantly remembers; a man, who exposed it to open scorn, by forsaking his paternal roof, more than a thousand years ago. It remembers more than one Bernard, who despised its pleasures; more than one Francis, who despised its riches; more than one Romoald, who, sooner than gain its honours, submitted to the most intolerable hardship. Now these are the men, whom the world admires, as being something above the common run; these it will honour and applaud, loading them with every high mark and tribute of its respect. *The memory of the just is blessed.* Do we not see it with our eyes? Their *memory* beyond doubt is *blessed.* But what, meanwhile, becomes of those, who so tenderly caress and esteem the world? Why, the world makes them at times its laughing-stock, and sets them down, as so many shallow, interested, ambitious, unprincipled, worthless characters; *The name of the wicked shall rot.*

That golden image, which Nebuchadnezzar erected to represent his supreme Majesty, is everywhere famous. Having assembled around it the different states of his empire, both civil and military, he commanded that, at the first sound of a great variety of musical instruments, all must fall down and worship it. In this vast assembly only three young men were to be found, who dared to despise this Royal edict. Protesting openly against such a ceremony and expressing their detestation of such a worship, they would sooner go into a furnace, hot as hell-fire, than comply. *Be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* (Dan. iii. 18.) Now who, pray, were the persons, whom this same King at last came to honour? Whom did he advance? Whom did he make his favourites? Was it those, who were so ready at once to fall down and pay him such vile adoration? Most assuredly not. But these young men, who had despised him, —these were the persons prominently selected for this honour. For, from their not having felt the fire the King knowing them to be in favour with GOD, by a new edict promoted

them to a dignity, as lofty as could well be desired. "After he saw them standing up and nobly erect, he had them proclaimed, and crowned them; and this he did for no other reason"—I am giving you the fine observation of S. Chrysostom—"for no other reason, than because they had despised him." Now this is precisely what the world is imitating every day before our eyes. Those, who are so impatient to bow themselves down before its image, it afterwards neglects; while those, who so far from complying with its worship would rather enter the furnace, however hot, of pain, disgrace and persecution, it honours. How great therefore must be the error of your supposing that the world for the best services you can render it will, under any circumstances, repay you in thanks and favour! No, Sirs: it will always prove itself faithless towards you, always treacherous, always ungrateful. Stoop and cringe before it, as you will, your homage will be all thrown away; all thrown away on a mere traitor.

8. I have more to say; for sincerely from my very heart I pity you, if ever you lend yourself in earnest to serve the world. To serve the world! to serve the world! Oh, the imposition of heavy laws you must then submit to, and the oppressive burdens you will have to bear, far more oppressive than any to be borne in the service of CHRIST! I can sympathise with you in the words of the prophet: *Thou hast broken the yokes of wood, but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron.* (Jer. xxviii. 13.) Mind, whether what I say is not true; for this is a very material point in my argument; by it I hope to win the day. Unquestionably CHRIST does impose strict laws on His servants: they must forgive, and forbear, and submit, and humble themselves, and deny themselves. Oh, the severe requisition! I grant it; but then we are perfectly sure that, when CHRIST demands such things of us, He will, together with His demand, give us the strength to perform them. *God is faithful*, S. Paul declares, *who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.* (1 Cor. x. 13.) He will assist us, as He did a Stephen, exposed to a hurricane of stones. He will strengthen us, as He did an Antony, abandoned to a multitude of devils. We

have therefore no ground to complain: because, as S. Leo most excellently laid it down, "He, who pre-vents us with His assistance, has a good right to urge upon us His demands." But the world does not treat us so. The world says, Hast thou been affronted? If thou wouldst preserve thy character, thou art bound at once to revenge the affront; for this is my law: and so it urges its demand, but does not pre-vent with its assistance; for it gives thee no means of taking thy revenge; it gives thee not money to hire assassins with, or to increase thy own body-guard. So the upshot of the matter will be this. If thou art poor, thou wilt get thyself into trouble, have to sell thy little property, to break up thy household, and peradventure, after all, to live in perpetual altercation. Sad indeed for thee! *They are cruel,* Jeremiah exclaims, *and have no mercy.* (vi. 23.) The world says, Art thou a nobleman? Thou must therefore make a grand appearance, keep thy carriages and horses, have a gay splendid livery: and so it urges the demand, but does not pre-vent with its assistance; for it gives thee not the means of supporting such an establishment. The world says, Art thou a merchant? Thou must therefore maintain good credit, engage houses and farms, keep up an extensive correspondence; and so it urges its demand, but does not pre-vent with its assistance; for it gives thee no capital sufficient for such an expense. The world says, Art thou a courtier? Thou must therefore please thy patron, press forward in securing favour and popularity, or, at least, not suffer thyself to be outstripped by any new candidate; and so it urges its demand, but does not pre-vent with its assistance; for it gives thee not the talent, the knowledge, the tact, the sagacity, necessary to this success.

Every inquiry we can here make will end in convincing us that the world treats its servants just as Pharaoh treated the wretched Hebrews in Egypt in the worst days of their bondage. He required of them daily toil and hard labour: they must build him hot baths, they must raise him fortifications, they must make him entire new cities. *Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw, go ye, get you straw, where ye can find it, yet not aught of your work shall be diminished.*

(Ex. v. 11.) Pharaoh requires hard work, but gives no straw. And such precisely is the behaviour of the world. It is urgent with its demand, but it does not pre-vent with its assistance. And are you so far besotted, as to wish to devote yourselves to a master so cruel, not to say, so faithless? one, who is so false, so imposing, as I undertook to prove? Ah, my Blessed LORD, what poor blind creatures are we mortal men, who will sooner bow down under *a yoke of iron* —for such is the treacherous world's dominion over us—than bear a yoke, which, by Thine own report, is so *easy* and *light!* Never let this be true of us—never! If any one is at liberty to do so, let him now immediately renounce the world, let him make his escape, let him throw himself into the arms of CHRIST, who, in order to provide him shelter, has opened so many cloisters, as the surest cities of refuge, where he will be safe. Let him take to himself that advice of the Preacher, "Go to the side of the holy age," (Ecclus. xvii. 25, Vulg.,) and no longer live under the delusion of those, who, as Jeremiah lamented, are so wedded to a lie that they cannot divorce themselves from it; *they hold fast deceit, they refuse to return.* (viii. 5.) Let him open his eyes to his past error, let him reflect upon his present danger; now, that his foot is yet at liberty, and he is free to make his escape, let him not put on the chain, let him not submit to so vile a bondage. *Give not thine honour unto others and thy years unto the cruel.* (Prov. v. 9.)

THE SECOND PART.

9. I anticipate already what you will say. You will impute to me a design in this sermon of emptying the world of its inhabitants, and of banishing every one of you to seek sanctuary in some Camaldoli, or Certosa, or mid the horrors of some more rigid Lavernia. I should think myself happy indeed, could I do this for you; but who am I in the sight of GOD, to presume upon any thing of the kind? However, beloved hearers, be assured of this The truth I have stated this morning, the discovery that the world is a traitor, has

induced very many to hate and abhor it. This is the truth, which has peopled our cloisters with monks, which has filled our groves with hermits, from a strong conviction in their minds of the egregious folly it must ever prove to trust the smiles of one, who has broken faith with all. "From that which is false," according to Ecclesiasticus, "what truth can come?" (xxxiv. 4.) You must not, however, suppose me to have lost sight of your state in life, generally, as it prevents you, either from age or from profession, from entirely renouncing the world. And in this case what have people to do? Must they sink in despair, and die of a broken heart? Not so; they have merely to follow implicitly what I now advise them. Let them set foot upon the earth exactly as the birds of the air do upon the ground. You have noticed the manner, in which these tender little things alight in some field to pick up seed, or near some river to get a drop of water. Well aware of their being in a land not to be trusted, where snares and springes are set on every side to catch them, they tarry no longer on the dangerous spot than necessity requires; and, even during the short time they allow themselves, they are ever on the watch, ever spying to the right and left: there they stand, anxious, timorous, suspicious; and no sooner have they once picked up the seed, than off they go, winging their rapid flight in the air. This teaches you what you have to do, that, according to the Apostle Paul's rule, you may so *use this world as not abusing it*, (1 Cor. vii. 31;) in other words, you must not in any wise set your affection upon it, must not entertain any leaning or attachment towards it, must not place the least confidence in it; briefly, you must so treat the world, as persons, conscious that they were dealing with a traitor, would do, that is, with the utmost imaginable caution. What a blessed guide is this to our conduct, my hearers! How wise! How sure to promote our safety and happiness! So great truly is my anxiety that every one among you should follow it, that I shall now, in conclusion, present it to you under a more luminous aspect by telling you what befel that illustrious son of the order of the Dominicans—Henry Suso.

10. He was once on pilgrimage from Lower to Upper Germany, where he had to traverse a certain forest, not so formidable on account of the wild boars and bears, that infested it, as rendered infamous by the many murders, which had been committed within its precincts. Entering this forest, as it began to get late, he sees advancing to meet him a robber of most terrible stature, aspect, and gesture. The robber was armed with a scimitar at his side and a javelin in his hand; he gives him a scrutinizing look and thus accosts him: "Stop, father, thou art to all appearance a good honest man: I wish to confess to thee." Henry, on hearing this, understood it to express the secret design the man had to draw him away to some more lonely part of the forest, and then with less danger of detection to murder him. Dreadfully shaken with a thousand dismal thoughts, he knew not how to decide. Should he go? What a risk? Should he try to escape? How useless! Should he cry out for help? Nothing more rash! In such an agony of bewilderment, he conceived his best course would be to commend himself heartily to GOD'S protection, and then to go with the assassin; who, forthwith, as he marched alongside of him, began to say, "Father, are you aware that I have been living for many years in this forest, where my occupation is to rob all passers by, and then to cut them in pieces and leave them to the wolves?" Only conceive what Henry's feelings were, on his hearing this. Contriving however to the best of his power to keep his countenance, "Well," he rejoined, "proceed with your confession." And so the robber continued. "There," said he, "a little further on, under that elm, I strangled a woman. On this very spot, where we are now standing"—it was on a high steep bank of the Rhine, which rolled its deep black waters through the forest—"here, I tell you, I once chanced to meet a Priest, a venerable looking man, like thyself, and I proposed to confess my sins to him. I did so, and scarcely had I received his absolution, when a sudden suspicion crossed my mind, that he might go and inform against me before some magistrate: to secure myself therefore against all possibility of this, I thought it best at once to run him through with this here sword, and then

with a good kick to send him headlong over this precipice into the water." Alas! at this, poor Henry felt almost a dead man. He glanced his eyes quickly to see whether the assassin's hand was getting near his sword; his legs gave way under him: his cold sweat, his languid eye, his deadly paleness, so vividly expressed his horrible consternation, that such a savage as this must surely have melted at the sight, had he not at that very time been truly and inwardly moved by the grace of GOD and been now really in earnest. Indeed, when he had finished his confession in the best manner he could, he thanked Henry for his services, accompanied him further through the forest, paid him great honour, and asked, before he parted company, to be remembered in his prayers; and through his instrumentality, we are told, the assassin was most graciously saved.

You learn from this story how a man shall behave, if obliged to have any dealings with an assassin. He only deals at all with him, because he has no other choice: it gives him pain, he suffers for it, and is continually commending himself to the protection of the ALMIGHTY. He is in a constant palpitation and alarm from the suspicion on his mind of some cheat being practised upon him, which at any time may take him unawares. Just so should you behave in your intercourse with the world. The world too, could it be brought to make a general confession of its sins, ought to plead guilty of being a desperate robber, whose only occupation in this mighty forest of the universe is to murder people; and to such an infinite extent, that it would be very imprudent to oblige it, in confession, to state their precise number. Still, it ought to confess that it once allured a giddy young man, such as Absalom, with a bright prospect of crowns and sceptres; and then betrayed him, and left him to die under the thick boughs of a great oak, to which he was tied by the hairs of his head, with three darts lodged in his heart. It ought to confess that on another tree it hung up that chief counsellor of David, Ahithophel, whom it wickedly seduced from his allegiance by the tempting bait of worldly advancement. It ought to confess that on another tree it suspended that chief favourite of Ahasuerus, Haman, whom it mali-

ciously excited to crush a rival to advance himself. It ought likewise to confess the unheard-of felonious cruelty, with which it treated a certain son of Jambri, mentioned in the first Book of Maccabees: for, having persuaded him to return home, he lay in ambush by the way, as the poor man in the joy of his heart was conducting his bride from a neighbouring city accompanied by a noble retinue; and then overtook him in a forest, where it delivered him to a large party of his enemies, who massacred him, and left him stripped, plundered, and naked on the public road. These and other still more monstrous assassinations, committed too on persons of your own grade in life, the world ought, one by one, to recount to you, if only willing, with the robber just mentioned, to confess the truth; and therefore consider well the course you ought to take. *See that ye walk circumspectly.* (Eph. v. 15.) See, whether you should embrace every offer, or close with every proposal the world makes you.

The world is that special "enemy," described in Ecclesiasticus, whom we are "never to trust." Let him pretend, as he may; let him fawn and pay court: this will not do, Sirs; "Though he humble himself and go crouching, yet take good heed and beware of him; set him not by thee, lest when he hath overthrown thee he stand up in thy place." (xii. 10—12.) Do I make myself understood? Trust not a flattering exterior, in smiles and simpers, pretty words, fine speeches, and winning looks; trust not one of them, but be rather more circumspect on this account. "Observe, and take good heed, for thou walkest in peril of thy overthrowing." (Ecclus. xiii. 13.) And, if circumstances prevent your entirely renouncing the world, be careful, as S. Chrysostom said, not to form too close a friendship with it. *Love not the world, love not the world,* (1 S. John ii. 15;) for the world is a traitor —a traitor of no ordinary stamp—a furious, a pestilent, a most unscrupulous traitor, who longs to do you the greatest possible mischief. Dalilah betrayed Samson into the hands of the Philistines. Doeg betrayed Ahimelech into the hands of Saul. Judas betrayed JESUS CHRIST into the hands of the chief Priests of the temple. But this traitor I speak of,

only give him the opportunity, would consign each individual among us into the hands of far more deadly enemies —even the dominion of Hell. And do we, nevertheless, still dearly love the world? Oh, the wonder, to find a traitor possessing such powers of pleasing; ay, of pleasing the very persons, who know him to be a traitor! Surely in this case, the greater blame must not rest with the betrayer, but with him, who suffers himself to be betrayed.

SERMON XXXI.

THE CURE OF DISQUIETING THOUGHTS ON PREDESTINATION.

S. John x. 20.

"I give unto them eternal life."

1. And when, my gloomy thoughts, will you cease tormenting me with all these perplexing doubts and difficulties, as to the final issue of my Predestination? My soul is in the condition of some frail bark, which, overtaken at the dead of night by the wild and merciless fury of the hurricane, no longer knows, which of the waves it is to hail as a friend, which to fear as an enemy; for, while one, lifting it up on high, promises fair to convey it to the stars, another, sinking it down to the bottom, threatens to carry it to the depths below. Just so a thought now comes into my mind, elevating my hopes, assuring me that I am numbered among the elect; and then comes another depressing me with fear, assuring me that I am condemned with the reprobate. But rest, rest, my poor distracted soul; for I discover a haven near at hand for my shelter: nor, wander and search where I may, a safer one, methinks, could scarcely be found in a night of such profound darkness, in a narrow strait of such dangerous navigation.

Away then, ye theologians, away from me, and come no more to confuse my mind with your tiresome objections. What is it you say?—that I do not know whether the Election

of persons to glory be subsequent to the foreknowledge of their good conduct, or antecedent? Quite true: I do not know this. You object that I do not understand how the decrees of Heaven, although immutable, are yet not compulsory? Quite true. You object that I do not comprehend how the Divine knowledge, although infallible, yet does not exclude contingency? Quite true again; I do not comprehend it. But what does all this prove? 'Tis but the fault of my own poor defective sight, which is unable to penetrate other secret things far less abstruse and less sublime; as, for instance, the mysteries of nature. "With labour do we find the things that are before us." (Wisd. ix. 16.) Be this as it may, no human being shall ever persuade me that I can be finally lost, if I do not wish it myself. Why then go about in search of a safer ground for your feet? Here, here is the rest, to which I invite all those among you, who on this enormous ocean are drifting to and fro without a rudder, without oars, without a mast, without sails. Refuse to cast anchor here, in a short time you must suffer shipwreck, either by splitting on some hidden rock with the unbeliever, or by sticking fast in some sandy beach with the ignorant. But, that you may be convinced of my having a good reason for promising you here security, give me more than your wonted serious attention this morning, while I prove that GOD, so far as He is concerned, is most willing that all men should be saved—*I give unto them eternal life*—and therefore that intolerable is the audacity of those, who, not content with offending so merciful a GOD, would also cast on Him the blame of their own destruction, liking rather to accuse Him of being unjust, than themselves of being impious and wicked.

2. First then, the truth of the doctrine before us would be sufficiently proved by adducing those repeated declarations, which GOD Himself makes to us in the Holy Scriptures; when He impresses on our minds no one point so forcibly as this, that, if we finally perish, it is our own fault. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.* (Hos. xiii. 9.) Now, if this were not strictly true, GOD would be the greatest liar in all the world; inasmuch as He would not only deceive us in a most momentous concern, but would even persist in repeating the

falsehood. But what interest can He possibly have to induce Him to deceive us, supposing Him to have it in His power? It was the opinion of Plato that every one, who utters a lie, does it from some fear he has of a superior power; as the criminal from the fear of his judge, the pupil from the fear of his teacher, the child from the fear of his mother, the servant from the fear of his master: whereas he, who is placed above all such constraint, has nothing whatever to deter him from openly speaking the truth. Hence that great philosopher inferred that GOD could never utter a falsehood, because no one could put Him in fear. This being granted, what fear could He ever have in candidly avowing that, without any regard to good works, He saves, according to a fancy of His own, whomsoever He wills; and also damns whomsoever He wills, supposing such to be the real fact? Would our noisy cavils, forsooth, at all distress Him? Would our blasphemies at all disturb His composure? Would our opposition place His crown in jeopardy? Not a bit of it. "For who shall say, What hast Thou done? Who shall accuse Thee for the nations that perish?" So spake of Him the author of the Book of Wisdom: "for neither is there any GOD but Thou: neither shall king or tyrant be able to set his face against Thee for any whom Thou hast punished." (xii. 12, 14.) We might revolt against Him to our heart's content; for He would no more care for our uproar, than the sun cares for those silly people of the south,[1] who, when it appears above the horizon, either load it with their invectives, or assail it with their arrows. So long as He assures us over and over again in His own Sacred Word that, so far as He is concerned, He desires the salvation of all men—*He willeth all men to be saved,* (1 Tim. ii. 4,) that He desires none should perish, *It is not the will of your Father that is in heaven that any one should perish,* (S. Matt. xviii. 14,) *He is not willing that any should perish,* (2 S. Pet. iii. 9,) *He came not to destroy men's lives,* (S. Luke ix. 56,) and that He has no delight in the death of a sinner, *I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked,* (Ezek. xxxiii. 11,) but rather desires his conversion, *that he should be converted,* and is anxious to

[1] Refer to Serm. XVII. s. 9.

have him saved, *and live*—such must surely be the true undoubted fact. But, since rational argument is not to be slighted in a discussion of this nature, provided human reason does not take the precedence of authority, but follow after it, acting the part, not of a mistress but of a handmaid, I will adopt with your leave this method of proof also.

3. You know already, my hearers, that GOD, being the cause of every other cause, and, as the Schools say, the Primary cause, it necessarily follows that He has a hand in all those different causes, which are called subordinate or secondary: and this, as T. Aquinas proves, to an extent far beyond any other cause. In this point of view, GOD has more to do in the springing up of the herbs of the field, than what the soil has; more, in the production of the metals, than what the planets have; more, in the respiration of the animals, than what the air has; more, in the ripening of the fruit, than what the tree has: and so we may extend our survey. But, if this holds good in its application to other effects produced, much more is it true in relation to man, in whose formation GOD bears the pre-eminent part. For in this case He does not merely concur, as being the Supreme cause far exceeding every other in power; but His influence reaches beyond this. While from our earthly parents we simply derive our bodies —the inferior part,—from Him comes to us directly that better part—our immortal soul. It is on this account that with a peculiar fitness we are called the sons of GOD, rather than the sons of our father and of our mother; seeing that from GOD alone we derive all that, which constitutes our distinctive nature. Our LORD seemingly referred to this particular circumstance, when He said, *Call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven.* (S. Matt. xxiii. 9.) Now what follows from this? It follows, that GOD, so far as He is concerned, can never have any wish to condemn us. "Neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living"—so we read in the Book of Wisdom. (i. 13.)

Ye fathers, ye mothers, only just tell me: would you wish to see a child of yours perishing by your own free choice down there in the flames of hell?—Ugh, Padre, what a ques-

tion!—And can you then suppose any wish in God that you should suffer such misery, in Him, who is a Father to you in a much more exalted sense, than you are to your own children? In such a case it would be better for them to have an earthly father, who has comparatively done for them so little, than a heavenly Father, who has done so much. Observe the conduct of that mother: see all the pain she suffers for the sake of her darling child, whom she brought into the world. Does she work at the needle? it is for him. Does she speak? it is about him. Does she sleep? it is of him she dreams. She cannot bear him to be out of her sight. If she hears that terrible north wind blow, "Alas! should my son catch cold!" if she hears of a dangerous epidemic abroad, "Alas! should my son take it!" And she is so far from finding any pleasure in the death of her son, that she cheerfully submits to many hardships in order to procure his happiness. But why do I dwell upon this? Don't we observe that even the brute beasts tenderly love their offspring? With what attention do they rear them! with what patience do they feed them! with what care do they provide for their maintenance! Observe the stork, when in some open exposed plain she can find no shelter for her tender progeny, how she spreads her wings as a canopy over them, so that the heat of the sun may alight on her, and not on them. Observe the eagle, when on some pressing occasion she must migrate with her little brood, how she carries them on her back, so that the arrow darted from below may pierce her body, before it reaches theirs. Why, the very senseless productions of our own skill and industry—our pictures, our books, our statues—how dear are they to us. Take notice of that lady, how she loves her beautiful piece of embroidery, because it is the work of her own fair hands; how troubled she is, if she sees a particle of dust fallen upon it. Woe to those little urchins, if they dare touch it; to that housemaid, if she once soil it! She is careful to fold it up in the cleanest linen; she deposits it in her box, preserves it safe under lock and key, and watches over it, as over a most precious treasure. And all for what reason? Because it is a property, inseparable from every cause, to love its own proper offspring, whether it be rational or irrational,

animate or inanimate. And can you then harbour a suspicion against GOD, as if He, the far more excellent cause, the far more peculiar FATHER of us all, should, so far as He is concerned, love to see a single individual among you burning through an endless Eternity in furnaces of fire, or shrieking on the lakes of ice, or writhing in the hideous dungeons of torment? Sirs, this cannot be; this cannot be. "Neither hath He pleasure in the destruction of the living." This were to fashion a God far more degraded than any human being; ay, much worse than the brute beasts themselves. If by dint of our sins we compel Him to act as our Judge, after He has in vain sought to act as our FATHER, He will reconcile His mind to our condemnation, because, "as He is righteous Himself, He orders all things righteously," (Wisd. xii. 15;) but we are quite sure, adds the Wise man, that, as concerns Himself, He does not wish us so great an evil. "He thinks it not consistent with His power to condemn him that hath not deserved to be punished." This is not to His mind; this is not His pleasure: and, beyond all question, He would far sooner act towards us the part of a Father, than the part of a Judge. And don't you observe the most tender yearning solicitude, with which "He stretches out His limbs, opens His side, offers His very heart, and invites our embraces; that by all such endearing appeals He may prove Himself to be our FATHER?" "What else," I further say with S. Peter Chrysologus, "what else does this certify, but that GOD does not so much desire to be LORD, as to be FATHER," and that "He implores us in His goodness, that He may not have to avenge Himself in His severity?"

4. And, in truth, how can we ever regard Him as having any wish to destroy us, while He takes such vast pains to effect our salvation? What would be the wisdom of a man, employing the most effectual means, in order to bring about a certain end, when all the while he was firmly aiming at some end diametrically opposite? Who ever sows a field, but with a view to its not bearing fruit? Who ever waters a flower-pot, but with a view to its not having flowers? Who ever lights a fire, but with a view to its not burning? Who ever teaches a pupil, but with a view to his not learning?

Who ever spurs a horse, but with a view to his not increasing his speed? These are the ideas of madmen. There is nothing surer than this, that, whenever we employ any means, our desire is to obtain the end, to which those means will conduct us. Therefore it is quite impossible for GOD, seeing He is possessed of infinite wisdom, to employ at one time certain means with a view to save all men, and at the same time to wish that no men by those very means should be able to ensure their salvation.

Represent to your imagination a huntsman, chasing the wild beast with breathless speed; now tracking it over the precipice, now pursuing it over the plain, now searching it in the cavern; suppose him here to have laid down his nets, there to have stationed his dogs; imagine him first shouting to scare the prey, then pausing and silent to secure it, and, lastly, taking his steady aim to bring it down; and that, in the prosecution of his design, he is all bathed in perspiration, yet without noticing it, and gored by the prickly thorns, yet without minding it. Can the slightest suspicion ever cross your mind, as to the anxiety this huntsman really feels to catch the wild beast he is pursuing? No one will dare to maintain that he takes all this pains in order not to catch it. Because if he meant no more than this, there was no necessity for him to leave his comfortable home. He might have remained on his downy pillow, enjoyed his balmy slumbers without venturing abroad to face the cold inclement air of daybreak, and risking his neck among the ragged rocks. Well; to apply this. GOD, in order to possess us in Paradise, acts like those huntsmen, who, when they cannot come at the prey in one direction, pursue it by a thousand others. So speaks S. Chrysostom on this point: "GOD does what huntsmen usually do, when they are in pursuit of such animals, as are most swift of foot and difficult to be caught. They do not attack them in one single, but in many different directions, and generally quite opposite ones: so that, should they escape one, they fall into another." But far beyond doing this, GOD has wearied Himself, has covered Himself with wounds and with blood; and even torn Himself in pieces, in order to possess us. What then does

this signify? Does it not most clearly express His good will towards us? If He had no mind to have us, He could have stayed in Heaven; He was under no necessity to visit our lower world. What end could He propose to Himself in suffering such pains of hunger, of thirst, of cold, of heat, of nakedness, of journeyings, of thorns, of scourges, of nails? Could He not have spared Himself all this misery?

Now you must not tell me that He suffered so much in behalf only of those, who were to be saved, and not in behalf of those, who were to be damned. For to assert this would be a horrible blasphemy; the very one condemned in our own days by the Vatican, as being wicked, profane, heretical, and highly reflecting upon the goodness of GOD. *There is one mediator between God and man*—nothing can be plainer than the Apostle's words—*who gave Himself a ransom for all.* (1 Tim. ii. 6.) CHRIST, in the truest sense of the word, died for all men, whether good or wicked, elect or reprobate. 'Tis on this account He is often entitled in the inspired Scriptures, "the Sun," and "the Sun of Righteousness;" that is, the Sun alike to all, as S. Ambrose testified of Him: "The Sun of Righteousness rose upon all men, came to all men, suffered for all men, rose again for all men." Therefore, so far as He is concerned, for all, who wish it, He has opened Heaven; for all, who do not wish it, He has closed Hell; and by His merits has procured from the FATHER sufficient helps for all men, in using which they may save themselves to the uttermost; even as S. John, who certainly well knew this truth, declared, *Out of His fulness we have all received.* (i. 16.)

5. It is, moreover, necessary that these same helps should be extended to all men with the strictest fidelity; not only because the Eternal FATHER cannot deny us what His Incarnate SON has purchased and merited for us with His most precious Blood, but for this further reason. Were we left without the most ample means, by which to save ourselves, it would follow, as T. Aquinas observed, that all, even irrational, creatures, would have been better furnished with means to attain their several ends, than man to attain his. Survey the whole creation: you will not find a single object, which GOD has not supplied with a proper capacity for attain-

ing the end assigned to it. The end, marked out to the heavens, is for them to be in perpetual motion, thereby to impart their influences to our globe: therefore, since they have no such informing spirit, as we have, to set them moving, a presiding Intelligence has been allotted to them. The stars are to relieve the horrors of the night during its thickest darkness; but they possess not in themselves a sufficiency of light for the purpose: therefore the sun is under express orders to provide them with it from his ever-refulgent orb.[1] The earth has to satisfy the wishes of the unconscionable farmer; but it does not contain in itself a sufficiency of moisture for this end: therefore the waters act on a permanent commission to fertilize it with their subterraneous channels. Brute beasts have not the skill to furnish themselves either with garments, as a preservative against the cold, or with armour, as a defence against the enemy; see then how, at their very entrance into the world, Providence provides them with all they want in these respects. Against the cold it shelters some with a thick skin, others with feathers, others with scales. Against their enemy it arms, some with claws, others with beaks, others with stings. The oysters, limpets, and scallop-fish, which live clinging to the rocks, have no feet to use in going to procure their sustenance. What then becomes of them? Why, the very rock itself round about them teems with the food they like. If the whale, that enormous live ship, were to roam about the sea by itself, it would often incur the hazard of foundering on the shore: therefore a very small tiny fish has the instinct to become its pioneer. If the quails, a weaker race, traversed the air alone, they would often fall a prey to the ravenous vultures; therefore certain other birds have consented to form their convoy. And so we may carry our inquiries over the universe, and not find an instance of a single creature, however insignificant, which, being devoid of all power in itself to attain its destined end, is not equipped with some other help placed at its disposal.

And now answer me this question. Pray, would you have

[1] Refer to Serm. X. s. 2, foot-note.

God make a better provision for the brutes, who are the servants of man, than He does for man, who is the lord over the brutes? But, for a certain, He would be doing this, if matters were not so ordered, as I have stated. For the end of man is to attain a superhuman happiness, such as is utterly beyond the compass of his own unassisted ability. We must therefore of necessity affirm, that God most surely provides him with other means—and those true and efficacious—by which he secures his end, his glorious destination.

Besides, in order that we may gain our end, He binds us to it by the most rigid precepts, and under the heaviest penalties. He bids us by S. Paul, *Lay hold on eternal life,* (1 Tim. vi. 12;) an expression tantamount to saying, "Although it seems to fly away before thee, yet thou must outstrip it, and seize it for thine own; *lay hold.*" It is right then that He should supply us with the ability to do all this: otherwise, would He not be the most barbarous tyrant we can well imagine? For what idea of God would you form in your mind, were He to command us to fly, but give us no wings for that purpose? or to bid us speak, but refuse us a tongue? or to bid us see, but decline to give us sight? Only then bear in mind, that it is far more beyond our power by our own single exertions to obtain eternal happiness, than it would be for us to see without sight, to speak without a tongue, to fly without wings.

And do you pretend that God will not accommodate us with such helps, as will prove sufficient to strengthen and confirm the power we possess? "For if among men it militates against all justice that one in authority should exact of his subordinates what he gives them no strength to accomplish, how can we reconcile it to our consciences to make God thus act towards us?" So Ennodius exclaimed: and so I exclaim too. If such a despotism could not be overlooked in a man, how shall it be tolerated in a God? Did not Saul offer his own armour to David, when he wished him to venture forth against the Philistine? Did not Elisha lend his own staff to Gehazi, when he wished him to restore life to the widow's child? Did not Moses commit his own rod to Aaron, when he wished him to people all Egypt with the flies?

And how shall not God act in a like manner, when He not only wishes us to take possession of Paradise, but absolutely commands us so to do? *Lay hold on eternal life.* Therefore, those assistances, which are unquestionably needful to the attainment of so vast an end—call them by what name you please, define them, as you think best: that is no concern of mine—are never refused to any individual, however wicked. For he either has them already, or, otherwise, by his mere asking, he can at once procure them, as the Council teaches, (Sess. vi. c. 10,) in conformity with that most famous axiom of S. Augustine, "God does not command things impossible; but by giving us the command He directs us either to do what lies in our power, or to seek help for what exceeds it." It follows that every justified person can continue in a state of Grace, if he be willing; every wicked person can find Grace, provided he be willing; and so all persons have an equal ability to save themselves, be they only willing. We fall back therefore on our first proposition; we conclude that we cannot cast the blame of our destruction upon God. *In very deed He will not condemn without cause.* (Job xxxiv. 12, Vulg.) He rather desires every man's Salvation with an unfeigned, generous, and thoroughly sincere good will; ay, and Himself helps towards it, so far as He can consistently do so. *God will have all men to be saved.* (1 Tim. ii. 4.)

6. But you will here stop me, and urge, by way of rejoinder, that it is now your turn to speak. "Grant that all have sufficient helps allowed them, by which to save themselves, still, is it not true that some persons have a greater share of these helps, and some a less? Well, this is the cause, why we make such tardy progress towards Heaven. You must not flinch, Padre, from this difficulty. We certainly expect you to remove it. Did God only grant to us the very same mighty assistances, which He vouchsafes to this or to that individual, so much our superior in holiness, we, too, should be perfect, we, too, should become Saints. But with us He contracts His hand, and with them He expands it. And so it will be nothing strange, if we come to a bad end, (which God forbid!) inasmuch as we only receive just a sufficiency, and they enjoy a superfluity."

Why, this rejoinder of yours is enough to set me on fire with indignation! *O! man, who art thou that repliest against God?* Silence, I bid you, or with these words of the Apostle I will cry you down, *O! man, O! man, who art thou?*—Are *you* then the person to presume to sit in judgment upon GOD? If He gives you in full weight and exact measure all, that He ever engaged to give you, what have you to complain of? Why these murmurings? Why these growlings? Do you then mean by this to impute the blame of your destruction to GOD? It is false, it is false. Shall He not be liberal towards one without wronging another? Oh, this is something very fine! It is GOD alone, in all the world, who is not allowed specially to oblige a friend! So long as what is due to each individual is regularly awarded him, "nothing wrong is done," says S. Prosper: "no, not if, among the company of the faithful, neither the same nor equal advantages, are conferred." Have I not proved that GOD supplies you with a Grace, that is amply sufficient? Having this, be content and depart in peace.—But no: on second thoughts I wish to detain you; for I would ask you, with what face can you dare accuse GOD of stinting His favours towards you, just as if you were not now making your complaint here in this city, here in this Church, and now in these favoured times? What complaints then might be expected from those wretched barbarous races, who, in their ill-starred destiny, were born either on the lonely shores, or within the forsaken islands, where the marshy waste or the monsters of the deep have absolutely prevented the entrance of the Faith and the planting of its victorious banner? And yet, even in their extreme case, they will not have a word to breathe in self-justification, if they destroy themselves by their sins. "Neither are they to be pardoned."—Why not? for no other reason, we know, but this; "because by the greatness and beauty of the creatures the Maker of them is seen," (Wisd. xiii. 8, 5;) because they had the means, in the knowledge they possessed of His creatures, to raise themselves, as by a ladder, to the recognition of the Creator, and therefore to serve and obey Him, according to that scanty measure of light He had flashed upon their minds. What then can

you say for yourselves? Can you complain that you are suffering from a deplorable want of means—you, who have been born in the bosom of Christianity, in so favoured a city, in so learned an age, and—many of you—of such noble families? What a treasure-house of the knowledge of Himself has GOD given you in all the oracles of Scripture! Did not most of you spend the very critical period of your early lives under the fostering care of parents, most anxious about your good conduct; of masters, who quite lived to make you happy? As you reached years of maturity, what peculiar helps and encouragements to a holy life did you possess in being so amply provided with spiritual fathers, so well qualified to direct you! in the plenteous store you had of earnest preachers, so competent to inflame your zeal! in such an abundance of good books, always at hand to nourish your faith! in such a body of religious men, eager to be engaged in your service! And what is the one great object of those guardian Angels ever near you, but to encourage you, now to avoid that vice, now to practise that virtue, now to resist that temptation, now to imitate that good example? How does GOD Himself by His secret internal illuminations help to sweeten to you the work of your salvation! Does He, if I may so speak, leave one stone unturned? Now He draws you by invitations, now He terrifies you with menaces, now He rouses you with reproofs, now He caresses you with prosperity, now He chastens you with the scourges of adversity. "On every side"—I use the words of S. Augustine—"He calls us to amendment of life. He calls us in our enjoyment of His creatures, He calls us by the reading of the Scriptures, He calls us by religious books, He calls us by His secret inspirations, He calls us by the rod of reproof, He calls us by the mercies of consolation." And, after all this, do you complain of Him? Grant that He does impart to some more powerful helps than He does to you, so as almost to appear bent on saving them, despite of themselves, as He acted towards Saul of Tarsus, whom He denounced for having already kicked *against the pricks*, (Acts ix. 5,) can this in the least justify your complaints, seeing that He helps you in so many different ways, and gives you not

only what simply suffices, but even more than suffices, for your necessities?

7. I would fain, however, with your leave, advance a step further, and stop every mouth by an argument considered by theologians to be most weighty, one, too, of general application. Tell me, then, are you quite sure that your helps, received to enable you to lead a Christian life, fall short of those, given to others more advanced in virtue? Perhaps because you find yourselves their inferiors in virtue, you therefore conclude that you are less provided with Grace, less furnished with assistances. But I deny the truth of the fact altogether, that it necessarily follows, when a person leads a less holy life, that this always arises from his having received less Grace; and that always, when a person has received more Grace, it must likewise follow that he will be more holy. No, Sirs. It is quite possible for two individuals, though supplied with an equal measure of Grace, to perform actions so unlike, that, while one deserves signal praise, the other deserves no praise at all. The fault here is not in the Grace, which is the same in both cases; but in the co-operation, which is altogether different. If you refuse to take this on my credit, hear what T. Aquinas says about it, though some have endeavoured to extract from his words an opposite doctrine. "Although certain Baptized persons sometimes may receive an equal measure of Grace, yet do they not employ it equally; but, while one through his diligence grows by means of it, the other through his remissness is wanting to it." One is greatly benefited, the other not at all, in the proportion to the use they severally make of it. Now don't you observe how, under the heat of the same sun, wax melts, clay hardens? Just so, S. Jerome tells us, under the influence of the same Grace, one heart becomes tender, another obdurate. Don't you see how, under the same showers of rain, one field sprouts with flowers, another with weeds? Just so, says Origen, under the influence of the same Grace one heart fructifies, another degenerates. And how clearly too does S. Augustine establish this doctrine, to the shame of his modern depravators! He puts the case of two persons, either through natural constitution, or

the effects of Grace, exactly of the same dispositions of mind; both of them, he says, shall gaze on the same female countenance; and one of them, nevertheless, shall be carried away with pleasurable excitement, while the other preserves his soul in chastity; and this from no other cause than the very different use and improvement each makes of his own free-will. S. Gregory of Nyssa, S. John Chrysostom, S. Cyril, S. Prosper, and S. Bonaventura, alike confirm this doctrine in their writings. The last of them expressly teaches, that "Sometimes a stronger, and sometimes a slighter emotion is excited in men's minds, the Grace in both cases being equal; and this depends upon the co-operation of their free-will."

How then can you have the confidence to affirm, that you have not received from GOD an amount of assistance to enable you to lead a good life, equal to what this or that person has received? Who told you this? What evidence have you to produce? What ground do you go upon? Say, if you please, that your Grace does not bring forth fruit; that it is ineffectual, that it is unproductive, that it comes to nothing. Say this, and you will speak the truth. But who then is to blame? Are not you, who, instead of turning the Grace of heaven to a good account, and with the zeal required in his beloved Timothy by the Apostle, when he bade him not to *neglect the gift that was in him,* (1 Tim. iv. 14,) leave the Grace GOD gives you quite neglected, just like those idle or ignorant pilots, who lag in the rear of the other vessels, not because they have not the same propitious gale of wind to speed them on, but because they omit to spread their sails, when it blows? Let us then hear no more of these querulous speeches against GOD. Never impute that as a fault in His gracious bounty, which arises from a defect in your own voluntary choice; it being perfectly certain that He willeth your Salvation, and therefore gives you every help in abundance to effect it, and far beyond what barely suffices; yea, He favours you, it may be, more in this respect than He does some of your brethren, who have yet got the start of you in sanctity and a heavenly mind.

Again, forasmuch as He must needs perceive in His fore-

knowledge that you will fail in co-operating with the assistances He affords you, for this reason the blame clearly lies at your door; for you have not done your part. Job described sinners, as being persons, who *rebel against the light.* (xxiv. 13.) The fault was not on the part of GOD, because He omitted to give them the clearest means of knowing the truth. No; they themselves closed their own eyes, so that they might not know it. As we read in another place, *They said unto the Lord, Depart from us,* (xxi. 14, xxii. 17;) and in another, *They turned their back from Him and would not consider any of His ways,* (xxxiv. 27.) And therefore, as a rule, impute all you suffer to your own fault. *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!* Heartily confess within yourselves, *It is I; I am he, that have sinned. I have done wickedly,* (2 Sam. xxiv. 17, Vulg.) Confess with Jeremiah that voluntarily you sell yourselves to be slaves to your enemy, for the sake of getting a mere nothing; *We have given the hand to the Egyptians and to the Assyrians to be satisfied with bread.* (Lam. v. 6.) Confess that you yield and surrender; confess that you fall down prostrate: it is all too true: but why? because it was your own pleasure; you wish to fall, you wish to surrender. No other reason can be assigned: *We deceive ourselves.* (1 S. John i. 8.) S. John says this of them. See you not how vast is the power of evil spirits, when they combine their forces? Yet not the smallest advantage can they obtain over you, unless you give your consent, and allow them. They can instigate you, they can importune you; but they cannot compel you. They *have said to thy soul*—mark that striking passage in Isaiah to this effect—They *have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over.* (li. 23.) Do you hear this? They do not dare set a foot upon you: *Bow down, bow down:* they make it their petition that you should prostrate yourself upon the earth. Accordingly, if they frequently get the better of you, if they kick you and trample you under foot, whence does it arise? Because by an act of your own you meanly consent to place yourselves under their degrading heels. They *have said to thy soul, Bow down, bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body to the ground and as the street to them that went over.* Well then, Chris-

tians, keep a good firm hold of your free-will, and never doubt the result. You will be safe, quite safe. The hellish Holofernes will never be able to touch the fair Judith—I mean your soul—if she stand firm. All he can do is to get her to "consent of her own accord," (Judith xii. 10, Vulg.,) to consent willingly. But leave him to his own devices; never mind him. Avoid to the utmost all occasions of temptation. Make a proper use of the means of Grace and Salvation. Take counsel frequently with your pastor, often receive the Holy Communion, continually commend yourself in prayer unto the LORD that He would come to your help; and I give you my word for it that you, too, will save yourselves, as others do.

8. But what is it, after all, that lies at the bottom of the whole matter? I can inform you. The main point you are aiming at is to devise some means of enjoying the world beyond what is allowed you, and yet, at the same time, of smuggling yourselves into Heaven. You would fain live after your own corrupt inclinations, indulge every desire, gratify every lust; and then succeed in getting to Paradise without having done one single thing to get there, and almost hoping perhaps that Paradise would come down to the earth to find you, and spare you every kind of inconvenience. But this is a thing utterly impossible. In the Bible one instance alone do we read of Paradise thus coming down to the earth to find any man; and that man was S. John. *I saw the holy city new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven.* (Rev. xxi. 2.) But what was the occasion of its coming down? What spot of earth did it touch? Have you ever considered this? It alighted on *a great and high mountain,* (xxi. 10,) a lofty eminence, a bare rugged mountain. And why so? As that City had to descend, why not upon a plain, and thus spare the now so aged, enfeebled, decrepid Apostle the fatigue of toiling up the mountain? Not so, not so, my hearers. Paradise is no gift to the sluggard: this is the mystery taught us here. Paradise is no gift to the sluggard. You must learn to get rid of such a foolish mistake. GOD willeth to bestow upon us His glory; but to do it in the shape of a reward; yes, a reward; and therefore we ourselves must take some

steps, and go forward to secure it. GOD *hath not appointed us to wrath*—this is most true—to what hath He *appointed* us? to *Salvation?* no; but *to obtain Salvation;* so says the Apostle, (1 Thess. v. 9,) His will is that we should gain it for ourselves. His will is that no occasion be given us in this world either to become slothful, or to become proud. In order to this, what has He done? He has so contrived, that the work of our everlasting Salvation should be neither entirely His doing, nor entirely our doing; not entirely ours, that we may keep ourselves humble; not entirely His, that we may not fall into idleness. S. John Chrysostom thus pointed it out: "GOD would not have us slothful; and therefore He does not do everything for us: nor would He have us proud; and therefore He does not leave us to do everything for ourselves." But what we prefer is, that He should do the whole, and ourselves nothing. This cannot be. It is His part to call us; ours to answer. It is His part to invite us; ours to come. *Thou wilt call and I will answer Thee.* He will cheer us on our ascent, and push us on, and bear us up. *To the work of Thy hands Thou shalt hold out Thy right hand,* (Job xiv. 15, Vulg.,) so that we may at last gain the summit, the lofty eminence, there to find the beauteous City, the new Jerusalem: but at our first setting out we must be on our guard, not to offer Him any resistance; for, should this happen, and we, in consequence, come short of the Salvation we desire, it is perfectly certain that the blame will rest not upon GOD, but upon ourselves. *O! Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!*

THE SECOND PART.

9. There is another excuse, which might be pleaded in favour of the wicked, on the supposition that GOD, in order to save them, required of them some very difficult duties, or some very painful sacrifices: because, on this ground they might lay to His blame a portion of their sufferings, should they finally perish and not be saved. But where does He ever demand of men any such sacrifice, in order to save their

souls, as He does not see them already enduring, in order to ruin them? Hear what Jeremiah has expressly recorded of sinners, *They have laboured to commit iniquity.* (ix. 5, Vulg.) Don't you believe that most of them pay an exorbitant price for their iniquity? *They have laboured, they have laboured.* Who can tell the amount of fatigue, how they over-work themselves, in order that they may perish? Now please inform me, my hearers, is the law of CHRIST a difficult law?—Oh, father, such a question to ask us! Is it difficult?—But answer me, in what respect is it difficult? Does the difficulty lie in its ill usage of our bodies, that they may not rebel against the Spirit? But how severe are those hardships you inflict upon those bodies, when you are carrying on some illicit trade or business? Do you not *labour*, and expose them to heat and cold, to storm and tempest? Perhaps the difficulty lies in bringing your wills under complete subjection to the dictates of reason? But to how many acts of bondage do you degrade yourself, when you are seeking some promotion; one, it may be, little to your credit? Do you not *labour* in going about cringing before courtiers, and statesmen, and officials? I shall say then here with S. Augustine, "If the soul suffers so much, in order to get means of its perishing, what ought it to suffer, in order that it may not perish?"

Perhaps, however, the law of GOD proves difficult in this particular, that it commands us, if we wish to save our souls, to value nothing upon earth in comparison of them—neither money, nor country, nor family, nor health; in a word, not even our own lives, when they may be required of us. But how often have we hazarded our very lives for the sake of some paltry notion of worldly honour! Are not people continually adjusting some matter of title, or precedence, or diversity of opinion, with the point of the sword? Never mind property, never mind family, never mind bloodshed, never mind the body, never mind the soul, all must go rather than not take our revenge! Knowing what an unequal match you were, and how far less influence you had to second you, you yourselves were the first to provoke an enemy, the first to insult him, the first to strike him, and with your most

absurd challenges you have *laboured* to go and lay bare your bosom to his sword. And when did it ever occur to you to hazard any such great thing for the sake of God? Does He ever demand more of you, to enable Him to give you Heaven, than what you exact from yourselves to purchase Hell? "O blind and desperate madness!" I exclaim with the eloquent Salvian, "Most miserable of men, what study and pains you are at to make yourselves wretched for ever! With far less painstaking, with far less paying court, you might succeed in making yourselves eternally happy!" Answer this to the best of your ability. You cannot evade the force of the arguments. Were your strength not sufficient to support you under evils endured for the sake of purchasing Hell, you might plead with some colour of reason your inability to endure trials necessary to your obtaining Heaven. But if you have a power to do what is bad, how can you excuse yourselves as not being likewise able to do what is good? And then, how much further might I press this argument, knowing, as we do, that reprobate sinners not only *labour* to destroy themselves, but even *weary themselves* in the task. 'Tis the confession themselves made in hell; "We have wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction, we have gone through deserts." (Wisd. v. 7.) I have not alluded at all to the hardships of war, nor to the horrors of a battle, nor to the perplexities of a lawsuit, nor to the pangs of ambition, nor to the cares of avarice, nor to the debilitating effects of intemperance; nor have I said a word of the pains, anxieties, and distractions of the one single mad passion of love—the tears shed, the servilities undergone, the jealousies endured, the insults put up with, the dangers encountered, the night's rest disturbed, the money squandered away, the reputation scattered to the winds, the diseases, even of foreign growth, contracted on this account. And are we not constantly coming in contact with our modern Amnons, who are *lean from day to day*, (2 Sam. xiii. 4.) for the sake of a Tamar, who pine and waste away in their inordinate lust? If you would only, ye young men, do for God's sake a very small part of what you sometimes do for some vile abandoned mistress—I argue the point, you see, very plainly with you—

would you do for His sake but this little, you would be more than saved, you would become Saints.

10. "O! father," you will reply, "in a matter of this sort you have no experience! We allow that the ills you have enumerated are painful; but then such sufferings have their pleasure and fascination. Our poets—perhaps you were not acquainted with the fact—have therefore called them *dolci amari*, sufferings sweetly bitter: they are congenial with our nature; they are just according to our taste: they are wholly unlike what we have to bear in obeying the laws of the Gospel; for these are all uncongenial, all distasteful." Say you so? I really was not aware of the great difference between the two; but I thank you for your timely suggestion; for what you say will now enable me to clench my argument more firmly. How then are we to account for this difference? Is it because the sufferings themselves, as to the matter of each, are so different? We can hardly say this, for it would flatly contradict the understanding we came to, when I spoke of enduring, for the sake of God, the same hunger, the same thirst, the same sleepless nights, the same struggles, which men suffer for the sake of others. The whole difference therefore comes to this; that in one case you suffer it for others, whereas in the other case you would suffer it for God. And, because you suffer it for others, it is therefore pleasant, it is therefore charming; it is therefore transformed into a "sweet bitter." Do I not state a fact? Come then; sinners really now have gained their cause. Should they fail to obtain their Salvation, they have their excuse in readiness, nor will they find it hard to justify themselves. Why should I spend my time and labour any more in preparing my proofs, waste my breath with such long periods, exhaust my strength with all these arguments? We may close the case at once. Sinners have a triumphant answer to every indictment. Why should we further wait and delay?

Let the Angels at once draw nigh, let the Saints draw nigh, let the devils draw nigh, let the heavens draw nigh, let the earth draw nigh, and let them all together now listen to me; *O hear ye this, all ye people, ponder it with your ears, all ye that dwell in the world.* (Ps. xlix. 2.) It is something

for *all* to hear. Sinners, if they do not save themselves, are nevertheless to be excused—Yes, after all, they are to be excused. And why? Is it because GOD had no will to admit them into Heaven? Not so; for He, as being their FATHER—their FATHER surely in the very highest sense—was most willing and favourably disposed to save them. Is it because they had not helps sufficient to enable them to get to Heaven? Not so; for it was their lot to be born in a land, where these helps are peculiarly abundant. Is it because the helps they received were not equal to those, received by others, who thereby were enabled to save themselves? Not so; for the rule does not always hold good that the man of the holiest life must have received the greatest helps. Is it then because they were not accustomed to bear all those trying hardships, which the desire of Salvation exacts of them? No, not even so; for they bear far heavier burdens for the sake of some worldly interest and ambition, some caprice or point of honour, or, at times, something still worse; insomuch that, as Jeremiah lamented, they are most willing to *serve strange gods day and night, who give them no rest.* (xvi. 13, Vulg.) Why then is it that, if they do not save themselves, they are yet to stand excused? Behold the why and the wherefore! Because they would have to endure these hardships and these inconveniences for the sake of GOD! I repeat it, to endure them all for the sake of GOD! This at once relieves them from all possible blame in the matter—they would have to endure them for the sake of GOD! Are you satisfied, ye sinners, bearing, as you do, the Name of CHRIST, with such an excuse as this? Is it your wish to plead it in self-defence, and that it should tell in your favour? Well, have your way. Be it so. Carry it with you to the presence of CHRIST. Speak it out lustily with a good courage, that all may hear you.—"Were we called upon to bear for the sake of others what we must needs bear for your sake, we should not find this task so difficult; it would rather be often pleasant, congenial with our nature, and just according to our taste; so as to deserve the name of a *dolce amaro*, a sweet bitterness. But for your sake we can't do this. We should feel any suffering for your sake to be total bitterness, and no sweet at all."—

Shame upon you, ye sinners! Can you find the heart to address CHRIST in any such manner? Is this the reverence you owe to His streaming Blood? Is this the gratitude you bear Him for His poor mangled wounds?—Blood, streaming for you—wounds, mangled on your account? To tell Him to His face that there is no pleasure in anything you suffer for the sake of GOD! Ah, it comes out too clearly that you yourselves have, in this matter at least, no experience to guide you. However, supposing you to be quite satisfied with this excuse, you have only to go on living in your sins, as you like. For my part, I should feel ashamed in any longer disputing this question with you. But, should your eyes be open to detect in this excuse the very worst plea you have ever urged in your defence, where will you then turn to find another? On what will you depend? And where is your answer? Will you not be convinced, that the wisest possible resolution all we sinners can now adopt for ourselves is to enter from this very moment upon the amendment of our lives, that we may so escape that tremendous condemnation, into which whosoever falleth will have none to blame but himself? *O! Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!*

SERMON XXXII.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE GREATEST SINNERS TO BECOME THE GREATEST SAINTS.

S. Luke vii. 48, 50.

"And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee . . . go in peace."

1. Happy Magdalene,[1] whose lot it was to have offended a Lord so full of love, that He was pacified at once by an act of humiliation and won over at the easy cost of a few tears! Supposing her to have in the same way offended that Pharisee, under whose roof the event of this day's Gospel took place, as much as she had offended Christ, think you that the Pharisee would have received her, as Christ did? The poor creature might have provided herself with as many perfumes, have decked herself out with as many jewels, as she liked; for on her appearing before him in this abrupt manner, taking him quite by surprise, no previous notice given, no

[1] Refer to Serm. viii. § 3, foot-note. The forcible and affecting displays, made in this discourse, of the pardoning grace and mercy of God will perhaps serve to qualify the charge, brought by some friendly critics against the preacher, of laying too great stress on "the terrors of the Lord." Segneri was certainly of S. Augustine's opinion, that more persons in their repentance are moved by the fear than by the love of God. *Plures sunt quos terror corrigit, pauciores quos allicit amor.* In whatever direction however he employed his eloquence, a holy zeal, as engrafted on a warm Italian temperament, led him at times to go too far and to over-colour his picture. In this point of view, the present Sermon may be read in contrast with Serm. xiv. "On the inconsolable torments of Hell."

favour of an audience requested before, coming too into his very dining-room, and at the very height of the festivity—he would have flamed with indignation against her. In his transport of rage and fury he would have darted from his seat for fear of being polluted by her touch, and "What, wicked woman," he would have exclaimed, "what brings you here? What an intrusion, what an impertinence, what a presumption is this! This is no haunt of vice; mine is no house of bad repute, with doors open at all times to receive the profligate. For you to come under my roof! you, to force your way into these rooms! you, to make your appearance before such an honourable company! Begone, insolent slut, begone; that the air may not be corrupted with the horrid stench of your impurities. We shall indeed require much more than your fine perfumes and ointment to sweeten it again. Pray keep to yourself those tears you can so readily command for the wicked purpose of decoying your numerous followers. Am I the person to be tricked by your fascinations? Am I the person to believe in your amorous sighs? Take care: I warn you, never again to venture your foot on my premises: and consider whether I am the person to allow you to speak to me, and much less to offer me your endearments?"

Such, in all probability, would have been her reception and welcome by the Pharisee, had she been required to implore his forgiveness. S. Augustine here wisely remarks; "If she had approached the feet of the Pharisee, he would have bidden her, Begone." And, in fact, we here read that, though he did not resent her conduct, he was highly scandalized at the gracious entertainment CHRIST gave her, and at a loss how to exculpate Him on this account, though he taxed Him with ignorance alone. *This man, if He were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him.* (S. Luke vii. 39.) CHRIST, on the other hand, abating not a jot, for all the Pharisee's murmurings, of His own tender loving-kindness, with what gentleness did He receive her! With what firmness did He take her part! With what readiness did He forgive her sin, not requiring even a single act of penance! Nor did this alone content Him: for He imme-

diately raised her to so high a place in His service, friendship, and confidence, that, with the exception of Mary the Virgin, no woman had a nearer place in His heart than had Mary the sinner.

This extraordinary display of the LORD'S mercy quite prevents my making use this morning of any severe language. It compels me to convert this sermon, which from its subject should be one of reproof, into a sermon of consolation. Those miserable beings, who are quite hardened in a course of sin and become irreclaimable, who are resolved, in spite of all GOD'S goodness towards them, to ruin their own souls, must here excuse me; for I have no wish in preaching to them to waste my time: but gladly indeed would I comfort and strengthen the souls of a different class of persons; of those, I mean, who are most sincerely and earnestly desirous to devote themselves for the future to the alone service of GOD, but who, from their deep conviction and overpowering sense of the enormity of their past sins, despair of ever becoming pure and holy. Say not so; far be it from them to yield so easily to any such desponding thoughts: let them rather dismiss every fear of the kind, and give me their closest attention, as I propose to demonstrate that a holy life has no greater difficulties for them, than it has for their betters.

2. To obviate any idea, you may have, that I am proposing something unreal and visionary, rather than true and practical, understand well the truth, of which I would convince you. It is nothing less than this, that you yourselves, the persons here sitting before me, persons, some of whom, have been perhaps carried away by the mad excesses of love or vindictive hatred—you, whose hands may have been recently stained with murderous blood—you, who are the victims of pride—you, who are the slaves of avarice—you, who are immersed in sensuality; yes, even such, as you, may not only obtain the immediate forgiveness of all your flagrant iniquities, but may also obtain such a fulness of Grace on earth and such an eminence of Glory in Heaven, as will leave you no room to envy the condition of others, who never ran into your excess of wickedness.

But pray be very careful here not to mistake me. I am far from asserting that you can ever reach this eminence by the unassisted efforts of your own natural will and power. Your condition would indeed be desperate, were you to ground your hopes on any such efforts. You would be lost without remedy, and, so far from attaining to that exalted holiness I mentioned, you would be unable to raise your souls from the depths of sin, in which you are plunged. But take courage, ye dear sinners, whom I love in the LORD. In a work so arduous and important you will not be left to yourselves; no, you are to be with GOD, and GOD is to be with you. And, when aided by an Omnipotent arm, what may you not hope to accomplish? S. Bernard has assured you that "what is impossible to us by our own nature becomes possible and even easy to us by GOD's good Grace." This he knew from his own experience. Others have found it so, as well as he. . . . Why then tell me of your despairing to reach any exalted state of holiness? You are wrong in thinking so meanly of yourself, very wrong: and I will give you my reason for saying so. Your state now, as sinners, quite disqualifies you from forming a correct estimate of what you will then be, when you are once strengthened and confirmed in a state of Grace. Yet why should this thought trouble you? Many things, which a person in health is capable of performing, seem impossible, quite impossible, to a man in sickness; as to run, to leap, to wrestle, to skip, and to dance. Let the sick man only recover his health, and he will do every one of them. *Thou canst not follow Me now*, said our LORD once pointedly to S. Peter, at the time of his greatest weakness, *thou canst not follow Me now;* and this was as good as telling him—so indeed S. Augustine strikingly commented upon it—"thou shalt recover thy health, and *follow Me.*" Indeed you will then possess quite another power, another spirit, another courageous heart, when the full tide of the Divine consolations shall enlarge your soul, when not in a mist, as now, but in a steady clear light, you shall discern the vanity of earthly things, the solid substance of things Eternal; when the devil shall no longer dare tempt you, when Heaven itself shall be at a strife in heaping favours

upon you, when the service of God shall so agree with your taste, as really to become to you a new and second nature.

3. Does it surprise you to see how the wild goat scampers over the cliff with so much agility, as not to leave a print of his foot behind him; or to see how the partridge flies aloft with so much velocity, as to defy the arrow winged after him from the bow? Every one at first sight would say that these poor creatures must be bathed in perspiration, or quite spent with fatigue at the end of their journey, as if it had proved a sore labour. And yet they have hardly felt it at all, because it accords with the nature of the wild goat to run, and of the partridge to fly. What man among us would not soon turn to corruption, had he to live under ground? And yet the mole thrives there, because he finds it natural. Who of us would not soon be suffocated, had he to live under the water? And yet the fish prospers there, because he finds it natural. Who of us would not soon be dust and ashes, had he to expose himself in the flames? And yet the salamander enjoys them, because he finds it natural. Thus no one experiences any pain, but rather pleasure, as Aristotle teaches, in performing those actions, which correspond with his nature. "Whatever is natural is pleasant."

Could you then raise yourself to that temper of mind, when acts of repentance, of contrition, and of devotion, would all become quite natural to you, would they not be—I say not merely possible—but really delightful to you? Certainly they would. Well, be now assured that the helps you will derive from Grace, are in a far higher degree efficacious. For we find, on consideration, that the ability derived from nature alone is, after all, so defective and limited, that in process of time by over-work, it becomes exhausted; hence the partridge will get weak by over-exerting his wings, and the wild goat by over-exerting his legs. Not so, in regard to Divine Grace. Not only does this never exhaust itself by exercise—like as Isaiah declared of the righteous, *they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint,* (xl. 31,)—but by this means it strengthens itself; so that the more a man runs, the more he labours in the way of God's commandments, the more facility and readiness he acquires thereby.

Nay, more than this. Observe what S. Ambrose asserted on this doctrine. He declares that a good man will sometimes reach a point, at which vice becomes more difficult to practise, than virtue. "Virtue, as we make progress, becomes so easy, that it is harder for us to do ill, than to do well." It is more difficult for him to cease from prayer, than to continue many hours in prayer; it is more difficult for him to neglect penitential exercises, than to perform them with strict severity.

Some writers have made a weighty reflection on the character of the patriarch Abraham: it comes in quite opportunely, as a proof of my doctrine. It is this. In order to send him quickly about the sacrifice of his son, it sufficed that the LORD should simply notice to him His will; *He said unto him, Abraham,* (Gen. xxii. 1;) but, in order to draw him off from this sacrifice, it was necessary that the LORD should cry to him with a loud and earnest voice; *He called unto him out of heaven and said, Abraham, Abraham!* So true it is, as these writers observe, that more pains are requisite to restrain a true servant of GOD from a good act, than at first to incite him to it. Why then do you harbour any doubt of your inability to reach a certain degree of holiness, however advanced, so long as your dependance for help rests not upon the power of an enfeebled drooping nature, but on that of an Almighty unwearied Grace?

It is true that you have to ascend with Elijah the most inaccessible summit of Horeb; but then it will be in the virtue of that most substantial nutriment, which will impart strength to your innermost soul. It is true that you have to traverse with Elisha the most rapid current of Jordan; but then it will be in the virtue of that most hallowed Name, which will open a path for you in the midst of the waters. You have—what more could you have?—You have to mount by a ladder, as lofty and precipitous, as the one exhibited to Jacob. This cannot be denied. Yet this need cause you no alarm whatever; because GOD Himself, with His own hand, will hold the ladder steady for your ascent; so that there will be no danger of your falling. *The Lord was leaning upon the ladder.* (Gen. xxviii. 13, Vulg.) For can you believe any of the

Saints to have ever reached perfection by his own virtue? No, no, says David; *neither was it their own arm that helped them.* (Ps. xliv. 4.) They were all frail and feeble, like as we are; all moulded of the same clay, all compounded of the same flesh with ourselves. Divine Grace alone rendered them mighty. *The right hand of the Lord hath wrought strength.* (Ps. cxviii. 16, Vulg.) Be therefore of good courage, sinners, beloved in the LORD; be of good courage, I say. You have only in true good earnest to make up your minds this morning that you will be Saints, and Saints you are. *Through God we shall do great acts, and it is He, that shall tread down our enemies.* (Ps. cviii. 13.) *Through God will we do great acts, for it is He that shall bring down those who trouble us.* (Ps. lx. 12, Vulg.)

4. Perhaps you will say; How can such a sinner, as I, know whether GOD is willing to give me this highly efficacious Grace? How can you know? Alas! that such a speech, so utterly ill-advised, should ever have escaped your lips! Let me tell you that by your distrust of GOD, as evinced in this question, you cause Him perhaps more heavy displeasure than by all the excesses of your past abandoned life. And why cannot you believe Him to be quite as willing to admit you, as He does others into His service—on the same intimate, cordial, and familiar terms—provided you yourself think fit to be so admitted? Has He not then poured out a river of Blood as plenteously for you, as He did for any of His chosen friends? Did not you cost Him as dear as did Pelagia of Antioch, or Thais the Egyptian, or William of Aquitaine, or Augustine? Not a jot more suffering did He endure for them, than for any among yourselves. Of you—even of your very name—was He mindful, when He let drop His Blood in the garden; of you, when He was writhing on the Cross; of you, when He sighed, when He groaned, when He mourned, when, *offering up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,* (Heb. v. 7;) for you, as well as for others, did He weep so bitterly. As then He paid down an equal price for you, why this fear that He does not equally regard you? I admit that you have made Him a most ungrateful return for all the dreadful villanies He suffered for

your sakes. I consider this, and I lament that it should be so: still, in spite of this, it may be questioned, whether you have treated Him worse than a Peter did, who denied Him: and yet, how dear to Jesus was this Peter afterwards! or than a Paul did, who persecuted Him: and yet, how pleasing to Jesus was this Paul afterwards! And what, if you have treated Him worse, ay, much worse, you are still blessed in this, that you have not to deal with men, but with God. And God has expressly given us to understand by Hosea, *I will not execute the fierceness of My anger, for I am God and not man.* (xi. 9.)

You are conscious, we will say, that you have grievously injured a fellow creature. The offence you gave him, in process of time, may have passed away; the matter may have been made up between you, and a reconciliation openly brought to pass: still, in consequence of what has happened, you can never afterwards feel on terms of entire confidence with him. And, to say the truth, I cannot in this wholly blame you. For, as iron, even when polished, has an aptitude in resuming its old rust; and as a firebrand, even when extinguished, has a disposition to rekindle its former flame; and as the sea, even when becalmed, has a tendency to return to its natural swell—so an enemy, although reconciled, is easily led to revive the former feeling of dislike. Now this fact will account for the conduct of David. When a young man, as remarkable for the prudence as for the gentleness of his character, he certainly more than once pardoned Saul, and showed an excellent spirit in doing so, Saul being at the time actually on his way to kill him. He pardoned him in the cave, when he was able with safety to himself to cut off the skirt of his garment. He pardoned him in the tent, when he could easily remove the spear from his pillow. But, in consequence of this, he never afterwards trusted himself entirely in his hands, for all the entreaties, which Saul, when brought to evident repentance and compunction for the past, with tears in his eyes made to him, nor for all the strong assurances he gave him, on the word of a King, that he would never persecute him for the future. So true it is, as S. Augustine said, that no recon-

ciliation, ever effected between man and man, can be regarded as quite sure and perfect. "Forgiveness among men is always in some way defective." But is it so in our dealings with GOD? No, no; the Saint goes on to say: "For GOD so completely forgives us, as never afterwards to chastise us by taking revenge, nor put us to shame by reproaching us, nor to love us the less by placing our sins to our account." Yes; in Him we may indeed repose our full implicit confidence; for He is a GOD, who will never feel aggrieved by our wickednesses, that are past, when He observes how they cause us at the present nothing but the severest pain.

Search the Gospel attentively as I can, and over and over again, I can nowhere find a single instance of CHRIST's having spoken a single harsh word to any one, under any circumstance, about his past offences—not to Magdalene for her impurities, not to Matthew for his extortions, not to Zacchæus for his over-reaching, not to Peter for his perfidy, not to Thomas for his unbelief. And, when He would reprove the infidel city Jerusalem for her transgressions, a commentator has observed the caution and reluctance, with which He set about it, saying, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee!* (S. Matt. xxiii. 37.) Now why was this? Had not Jerusalem in times past *stoned* and *killed* a far greater number of the prophets, than in those days, when CHRIST used these words? Assuredly she had. Nevertheless He did not say that *hast killed* and *hast stoned*, but He said that *killest* and *stonest*; because GOD does not take into His account offences past, that are already forgiven, but only offences present, which remain to be pardoned.

It is perfectly impossible that those magnificent promises should all end in nothing; those, I mean, which He made us by the mouth of His prophets; as for instance, delaring, at one time, that He would *cast our sins into the depths of the sea*, that they should never rise to view on the surface, (Micah vii. 19;) or that He would scatter and cause them to disappear, and *blot them out as a thick cloud*, (Isa. xliv. 22;) or, more clearly still, that He would attach no more weight to them than if we had never committed them. *I will have mercy upon*

them, and they shall be as they were, when I had not cast them off. (Zach. x. 6, Vulg.) This is not the ordinary mode of proceeding among men. A father loves most tenderly that son, who has invariably obeyed him, and looks stern at the son, who has been wild and stubborn. A prince favours most highly those subjects, who have been invariably loyal, and looks cool at those, who have been inclined to rebel. A captain most freely indulges those soldiers, who have been invariably faithful to him, and is more strict with those, who have been disposed to mutiny. But not so GOD, as the prelate S. Gregory declares. Had we in times past been always unfaithful, disloyal, disobedient to Him, it would deduct nothing from the regard, the favour, the affection He will bear us afterwards; but, if we will love Him in the degree that innocent persons do, He will love us, as if we were indeed innocent. "He receives the penitent in like manner as He receives the righteous." Oh, what precious comfort for you is here! "He so receives the penitent, as He receives the righteous."

5. . . .[1]

6. See now the difference between your way of arguing and mine. You argue that, because you have been great sinners, GOD would exclude you from the number of His greatest Saints; and I argue that GOD will include you in the number of His greatest saints, because you have been great sinners. Pray listen. You have lived many years in sin. Is it not

[1] The argument, upon which the section here omitted in the translation is grounded, is quite inadmissible. We cannot consent to place the legendary saints of Ecclesiastical Biography on the same level with the Saints of the Old and New Testament. But this is what Segneri does in this section. In his zeal to show the exceeding great favour of GOD towards the penitent, he maintains that they have been enabled to perform miracles, to the full extent of those, wrought by holy men, who have "feared GOD from their youth." He instances Joshua, arresting the sun, Elijah and Daniel controlling the elements and wild beasts, and S. John drinking poison with safety; and then confronts them with the parallel case of Mutius (a converted assassin), William the anchorite of Aquitaine, Catherine of Sienna, and others, who, we are to believe, did equally wondrous and even more wondrous things.

It may here be observed that the greater number of omissions, made throughout this translation, relate to the miracles and austere practices recorded in the Apocryphal histories of the lives of the saints of the Church of Rome.

so? I really feel a difficulty in bringing myself to think so badly of you; but come, let us suppose the fact. Now for what reason, think you, has God, up to the present, borne with so great patience all your grievous provocations? so many blasphemous words in your loose hours, so many frauds in your legal contracts, so many impieties in your religion, so many oppressions of the poor, so many outrages against the righteous; every one of them sore offences, not to mention others levelled directly against Himself? Was it not then in His power to carry you off by death the first time you provoked Him, even in your earliest youth? How many occasions were every day presented to Him of letting you slip down a precipice, or fall from some window, or sink in a river, or be struck by an arrow. And yet He has allowed none of these things to harm you. He has preserved you with a forbearance and with a long suffering utterly incredible; yea, He has even cherished you with the extreme of loving-kindness. Now of what is this a sign? It is a sign of His expecting some remarkable return from you by way of compensation. He does not sustain your life, at all this cost to Himself, in order that you may persist in offending Him. It is not for this that He supplies you with fruit in the gardens, to appease your hunger; nor with water in the fountains, to relieve your thirst; nor with breezes on the hills, to refresh your languor. When He confers on you these obligations, His design rather is to move you by a sense of love, that you may avow yourselves to be forcibly won over and subdued by such exceeding kindness, and so led to give yourselves up as zealously to His service for the time to come, as in times past you basely offended Him. Let me never therefore hear another word from you, betraying the least doubt in your minds, whether God have any care and concern for your welfare: for, had He not cared for you in a supreme degree, you would instead of being here to-day, be now miserably groaning with condemned souls, or raving with devils; nor would He have ever prompted you this morning to go and hear the Sermon, as one more effort, on His part, to save your soul.

Besides, have you never heard that the most abandoned

and desperate sinners are precisely, of all others, the persons He delights to seek out? *The Son of Man is come to seek that which was lost.* (S. Luke xix. 10.) A very intrepid sportsman likes to station his dogs on the spot, frequented by the most savage wild beasts. A very clever physician takes a pleasure in employing his science, where the patient's case is most deplorable. A very dexterous pilot glories in exercising his skill, when the winds are most contrary. A very able advocate prides himself in putting forth his power, where the cause is most hopeless. A very experienced farmer rejoices in applying his manures, where the soil is the poorest. And so the wretched plight you are in does not scare away GOD'S mercy from you, but rather stimulates His desire to exhibit in your particular case the exquisite nature of His love, and to verify those words of the Apostle, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound,* (Rom. v. 20;) provided always you are ready to work together with GOD, throwing your heart wide open to receive His Grace in all its intended fulness.

7. I am quite aware that there will, of necessity, be much for you to pass through, especially at your first start, in order to wean you from all those bad associations, licentious and self-indulgent courses, and dishonest practices, which habit has rendered quite familiar to you. Still, cheer up; for this very circumstance will induce the LORD to welcome you to His arms with more affection, and to embrace you with more abundant good-will. That poor prodigal son, in his intense longing for liberty, fancied that, when once far from his paternal home, he would have to enjoy almost a golden age in one continual round of feasts and banquetings, in prosperity without end; but he found at last his golden age reduced to this, and nothing more—that he must feed on husks. In the lowest state of remorse and destitution he therefore thought of returning home, of throwing himself at his father's feet, of imploring his forgiveness; *I will arise and go unto my father.* (S. Luke xv. 18.) He did not form this admirable resolution from any sense of love or gratitude, which he felt. No, Sirs: he formed it with a view to his own interest alone, and when he had no other alternative before

him. Hunger, nakedness, filth, and misery—these were the motives, that drove him back to his home, as S. Peter Chrysologus expresses it, "Famine calls him back, whom plenty had sent away." And yet, how lovingly was he welcomed home! One might have supposed that at the first sight of him, his father would have, in justice, exclaimed—"Ah, ungrateful son, now is thy time, when not a soul is left, who cares in the least about thee, for thy coming home. When thou hadst a number of friends, pleasant fare, warm entertainment, it never once occurred to thee to send me even a kind word. Were I to treat thee, as thou dost deserve, I should pack thee off at once to those friends, in whose company thou hast squandered thy patrimony, and I should leave it to them to save thee from dying of starvation. I might justly shut my door in thy face; I might banish thee from my presence; I might disown thee, as my son." It would seem that this good father ought to have addressed him in this manner, at least as a salutary admonition. But he didn't. He preferred acting after the example of the sea, which never upbraids the returning streams of the river, because they departed from it and went off such a distance, which never keeps them awaiting its pleasure, never requires of them any supplication, but instantly admits them to their former privilege of mixing with its waters and partaking its benefits. Just so did the good old man instantly spread his arms over the neck of his penitent son, folded him to his bosom, kissed him, bedewed him with his tears. He despatched the servants to bring forth quickly the most splendid apparel for him, to make the table groan under the most sumptuous delicacies, and to get up a concert of the most delectable music. And—which is still more remarkable—he had the ring placed on his finger; *Put a ring on his finger:* for this giving of a ring in trust was in those times the sign of a predilection for the son, to whom it was given, in preference to the other children.[1] Now my argument on these grounds is this. If any such kind of son, a son, that

[1] As some readers may think that Segneri here overstrains his argument, and shows too much favour to returning prodigals, an extract is subjoined

is, who returns to his father from no other motive or cause whatever, than because he feels himself perishing with hunger or dying from cold, is, notwithstanding so poor a motive, received by GOD with such marked indulgence, what a reception may you, my brethren, hope to obtain, who return to Him, when at the summit of your worldly success and popularity, in the fullest enjoyment of your riches, your honours, and your pleasures—you, who freely renounce all these, that you may henceforth live unto GOD? With what affection then will He welcome you! With what cordiality? With what eagerness! Will He not most willingly supply you with all the necessary means of attaining that eminent holiness, to which your souls aspire, filling you, to say the least, with a lasting sorrow and contrition for your sins; that spiritual nectar, so refined and so delicious, which He promises us by Isaiah, when He says, *I will water thee with My tears* (xvi. 9)?

Margaret of Cortona surrendered herself to follow CHRIST; and why? because her father had chastised her with a rod: yet CHRIST did not disdain receiving her, as a most cherished friend. Paul, named the simple, surrendered himself too: and why? because his wife had betrayed his honour: yet CHRIST scrupled not to promote him, as a most trustworthy servant. Others devoted themselves to the obedience of GOD from a mere apprehension of some impending bodily danger;

from the writings of the judicious Dr. Waterland, which sets the matter on its proper footing and corrects any such tendency in this Sermon, if it exists.

"We may be confident that our LORD had no design to put any slight upon men who constantly lead a regular life, nor to prefer a returning penitent before a person, who has held an uninterrupted course of piety and virtue. The man, who had lost one sheep out of the hundred, did not value that lost above the ninety-nine left; no, nor above any single sheep of the same number, so far as appears: to be sure he would not have parted with any one of the whole for the recovery of what was lost, because that would have been doing nothing but endeavouring to repair one loss by another, and indeed by a greater, all things considered. . . . . The very term and structure of the three Parables (S. Luke xv.) abundantly show that it was no design of our LORD to prefer a late penitent before a person of an even and uniform life, much less to prefer one single such penitent before numbers of the better kind. The Parables themselves convey no such thought; and it would be absurd to interpret a few particular words of somewhat doubtful meaning against the plain and undoubted drift or tenour of the whole discourse."—*Dr. Waterland.* (Serm. S. Luke xv. 10.)

as Arsenius the Roman, when he found himself entrapped by Arcadius; as Ephrem the Syrian, when he saw himself immured in a prison; as Moses the Ethiopian, when he perceived himself surrounded by his enemies; as Gerard of Clairvaux, when he felt himself wounded in battle; as Romuald of Camaldoli, when he knew himself to be condemned by the magistrates: and, notwithstanding all these low inferior motives, God thought fit to show these persons His favour, and to magnify His affection towards them by raising them to be such distinguished Saints. How then may we expect Him to act towards you, who, being wealthy, independent and prosperous in your business, strong and hearty, resolve—all of you—now to return to Him; not (as is evident) from the want of a roof to shelter you, nor from scarcity of food to support you, nor for any apprehension of losing your reputation, nor for any dread of enemies, nor for any fear of death, nor for any sudden reverse in your circumstances,—nor, in short, from any outward pressure and compulsion,—but simply because, of your own free choice, you wish to engage in God's service, in preference to that of this vain transient world, to mortify and to subdue yourselves, and to realise thereby, in your own persons, that miracle of self-abasement, figuratively predicted, when even the lions would one day openly forsake their predatory life, and, like so many oxen, learn to abhor bloodshed and be content to eat straw—*the lion shall eat straw like an ox* (Isa. xi. 7)? How can you possibly suspect that God will turn you adrift, absolutely refuse to receive you with His favour, or show you any tokens whatever of His endearment and love? I submit the whole of my argument to your consideration. If the thing really seems possible, then you have my consent to distrust Him. Still, with every reason we can well conceive to embolden your confidence in Him, why yield to the slightest fear? Why harbour the remotest doubt and suspicion? Why suffer yourselves to be thus kept back from devoting your lives to God, under a firm conviction that, although you are great sinners now, it is yet quite in your power to become as great Saints for the time to come?

8. Oh, that you had the ingenuity to elicit from the very

fact of your wretchedness a fresh ground of confidence and hope towards God! I find in the Scriptures a most astounding mystery, which has been well pointed out by S. Jerome. The lot of the second-born, it appears, has usually proved more fortunate than the lot of the first-born. Cain was the first-born, yet Abel was more favoured than he; Ishmael was the first-born, yet Isaac was more favoured than he; Esau was the first-born, yet Jacob was more favoured than he; Manasseh was the first-born, yet Ephraim was more favoured than he; Eliab was the first-born, yet David was more favoured than he. I might mention many other examples. Now I shall feel obliged, if any one will inform me what class of persons we are to understand by the first-born? The first-born are the innocent. So Theophylact, so Tertullian, so S. Cyprian expressly teach me. But, without offence to these innocents, let it be said that they are not exalted in the Church of God before the second-born, that is, before the penitents; as it appears to me, they are rather placed after them. In the Church's very highest place I do not observe those two young disciples, those two most innocent souls, but a Peter once a perjurer, and a Paul once a persecutor: and why so? It was that no one among us poor penitent sinners might lose heart, when reflecting on those depths of wickedness, in which we were sunk. Oh the heights we may ascend to for all this—ay, even we—provided we sincerely wish to be thus exalted! We, we, I say, though in times past so degraded, have it still in our power entirely to change our condition, to lift our souls to Heaven, to outstrip even these innocents, to become Saints, to be what our noble-minded Magdalene was to her honour and praise. But, to this end, what is to be done? Let us rest awhile, and you shall presently hear.

The Second Part.

9. A calm review of the immense comfort I have now proposed to sinners will prevent your ever supposing me to have hereby given them any occasion to extract poison from what I intended to be medicinal, and to have supplied them with

the ground for a presumptuous hope that they may safely continue in their sin, instead of immediately saving themselves from it. Were any of you, however, mad enough to suppose me capable of this, woe be unto him! On such an individual I should be ready to discharge myself with more than a tiger's fury; nor would I cease howling in his ears, till I made him understand the distinctive mark, that separates the elect from the reprobate; that, whereas the elect take encouragement from the Divine mercy to lament their sins, the reprobate grow bold in adding to them. It is one thing to have recourse to the Divine mercy, after the commission of sin; and another thing to commit sin, because recourse to the Divine mercy yet remains in our power. The first is a wish that GOD should forgive us our sins; the second that He should patronise us in them. But because so great a madness, I am sure, cannot possibly enter the mind of any present, I once more address myself to those among you, who, being wearied with their past iniquities, are now all longing to return to GOD, and henceforth to serve Him with a degree of fidelity proportioned to the disobedience of their former lives. Plunged, as you have been, so deep in the sink of vice, by what means will you contrive now to raise your souls to such an elevation of purity and holiness? Here you will naturally expect that I should advise you by all means to commence your ascent gradually, to begin step by step, to-day to detach yourself from one pleasure, to-morrow from another; to-day to retire from one society, to-morrow from another, and to proceed in this manner, moving gently onwards towards your perfection. But, excuse me, I propose advising you to adopt quite a different method. So long as you act on this principle, you are not relying sufficiently on that Divine Grace, which is to be your friend and assistant: nor do you seem to remember that not your own feet, but His Divine wings, are to lift you up to this grand elevation. I must therefore tell you that, as ever you wish to become Saints indeed, you must form a noble and daring resolution. The course to be pursued by great sinners differs from that of ordinary men, educated in virtue or, at least, not habituated to vice. Let

these move quietly on, stage by stage, and they may yet, in many instances, reach their perfection; because they are not retarded, at every step they take, by the incumbrance of those vicious habits already formed. But, in the case of great sinners, if they do hasten their passage quick over such slippery ground, they soon fall back: and hence you will find, on further inquiry, that almost all the persons, who have raised themselves from the abyss of iniquity to pre-eminent holiness have, so to speak, won the prize by a good, brave, determined leap at first starting. . . . . Take courage then, my tenderly beloved fellow-sinners, this is the very enterprize, to which I call you this morning; that you would at once decide on making some magnanimous venture for the GOD you have so deeply injured, and without delay set about it. The Grace of the HOLY SPIRIT cannot tolerate our slow dull pace. His Grace does not sanction our tardily adopted plans. His Grace enters the heart, and operates there, like the lightning, which is no sooner born in the clouds than it is impatient to contrive some outlet, some way to accomplish its important designs.

10. Nor let any fear of your being unable to maintain your steadfastness, in this new choice of a far better life, deter you from entering upon it. For, as it is in your power, with the help of the Grace GOD now gives you, to make a beginning, so you will be able by the same help to make an end. And now, when from a motive of love towards GOD you have so nobly made up your mind, think you that He will abandon and leave you to yourself? Does He now receive you, being sinners? Is it then likely He will cast you off, being penitent? These are His own words, out of His own mouth: *Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.* (S. John vi. 37.) Where, for heaven's sake, is the man, who buys a field, and does not afterwards take care to cultivate it? or who builds a house, and does not afterwards like to live in it? Observe yonder gardener, who, by dint of hard labour has prevailed upon that old stump of a tree to sprout once more. That one particular tree he cherishes beyond all the rest in his garden, that are naturally productive. He waters it more plenteously, than he does the others. He is far more careful

in keeping it clean; and no sooner does any stranger visit the spot than immediately, as if quite forgetting or totally disregarding the rest, he says to him, "Just look, Sir, at that tree!" Why then should not GOD make the same account of you, when He has worked so hard, and taken such pains on your account? At least, if I may so speak, He will love what is the labour and produce of His own hand in you, and, exactly as Tertullian gave his opinion on this point, "He will most dearly cherish what He has Himself acquired." Be of good courage therefore, O my Christians, be of good courage; for I am willing to act, as your surety in this matter of the Divine goodness. I will say with Nazianzen; "You may surely reckon on me, as your sponsor." If you have not the holy boldness and the courage of the Magdalene to draw near to the feet of CHRIST, to wash them with your tears, to imprint them with your kisses, I, as your representative, am ready to step forward, and to address the LORD to this effect in your behalf, "LORD, I know that many sinners abuse Thy mercy, and still Thou dost frequently endure them with great patience. This people are not thus minded towards Thee. Their petition to Thee is rather this: that, since Thou endurest the sinner, who can abuse Thy mercy for the purpose of insulting Thee, Thou wilt not reject the sinner, who now implores that mercy for the purpose of being converted to Thee. But, if in requesting this they are too presumptuous, then it is I, LORD, whom Thou must punish: for I am the person, who without reproving them even once for their offences against Thee, have been doing all I can this morning to comfort and encourage them. But was this not right in me? Oh, adorable mercy! Oh, surpassing loveliness! Sinner as I myself am, yet see how little I dread Thy indignation, how I have spoken out, and publicly confessed before all this people that I, too, in my madness have more than once provoked Thee; yea, have challenged Thee, dared Thee to the combat, and, to crown all, trampled Thy honour under my feet. 'I have sinned, I have done ungodly, I have dealt unrighteously in all Thine Ordinances,' (Baruch ii. 12:) and, notwithstanding this, Thou hast not only endured me with extreme forbearance, but hast granted me the gift of re-

pentance. Thou hast placed me among Thy servants, Thou hast enrolled me among Thy priests, Thou hast numbered me among Thy preachers; and if, Alas! in this same holy calling, I have made Thee a most unworthy return, my own unaccountable wickedness is to blame for it, and 'tis no fault of Thine infinite goodness. And now, having thus dealt with me, is it not Thy will that I should go and call every sinner to repentance? Never oughtest Thou to have put me into the Ministry, unless with a design that I should fully preach Thy Gospel. And now I more than promise immediate forgiveness of sin to all, who seek Thee. I go further. I promise every penitent here present that Thou wilt receive him, as a friend, even such a friend, as he desires to approve himself to Thee. I promise him, Thou wilt be his helper under temptations. I promise him, Thou wilt be his supporter under difficulties, his defence under dangers, his consolation under fears and discouragements. Lastly, I promise him, that, as Thou hast enabled him now to forsake his sins, so Thou wilt enable him no less to persevere for the future." This, O Christians, is the blessing, which from this pulpit I assure to you on the authority of S. Paul: *He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it.* (Phil. i. 6.) Animated by this express assurance, it remains for you to consider what magnanimous deed you can now perform, to evidence your love to that SAVIOUR, who, for the love, wherewith He loved you, sunk down upon His Cross in the agonies of death.

SERMON XXXIII.

ON THE TRUE PRINCIPLE OF EXPEDIENCY.

S. John xviii. 14.

"It is expedient that one man should die for the people."

1. And will it then be *expedient* for Jerusalem that Christ should die? Oh, foolish counsels! Oh, mad counsellors! *Then* would I have you answer me this question, when all the country round about you is covered with soldiers and the implements of war; when you will see the Roman eagles nesting themselves close under your walls, there without loss of time sharpening their talons, and getting ready to swoop upon the prey; when you will hear the hoarse murmur of the drums and trumpets, the frightful hissings of the slings and arrows, the mingled groans of the wounded and dying. Then, at such a time I would have you answer me, whether this be *expedient* for Jerusalem. And will you then boldly assert, *it is expedient,* when you behold blood rolling in torrents and carnage piled up in mountains? when the buildings are sinking beneath your feet in ruins? when the fainting brides swoon before your eyes? when you see in every direction, turn your astounded gaze where you will, barbarity in all its madness, fury carrying all before it, and death in rampant triumph. Alas! those tender babes, who will be for food to their starving mothers—they will not say, *it is expedient;* nor

either those young men, who will go into slavery, sold thirty for a penny; nor those aged men, who will be hung up, crucified by five hundreds every day. Ah, ye poor unfortunates, how little, how not at all *expedient* is all this for you! To the Sanctuary, when it shall be polluted with abominable filth, *it is* not *expedient;* nor to the Temple, when it shall fall under the rage of the devouring flame; nor to the Altar, where, in the place of lambs and bulls, they shall slaughter human beings, men and women. *It is* not *expedient* to the probatika,[1] which shall drain its water that it may run blood. *It is* not *expedient* to Olivet, which shall lose its timber for the supply of crosses. *It is* not *expedient* to the Priesthood, which shall lose its prerogative; nor to the Kingdom, which shall lose its jurisdiction; nor to the Oracles, which shall lose their utterance; nor to the Prophets, which shall lose their revelations; nor to the Law, which, even as a dead corpse, shall be left without any life, or power, or credit, or honour, or authority, no longer able to glory in its ceremonies, no longer able to deliver its servants. And, for all this, thanks be to GOD, who lives above the heavens, that from thence He may pour contempt and confusion on all those persons, who trust more in certain wicked reasons of state-policy than in all the honest demands of justice; thanks to that GOD, who by a signal example would show that *there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord.* (Prov. xxi. 30.)

The case stood thus. It was resolved to put CHRIST to death, as the means of preventing the Romans becoming masters of Jerusalem; and the Romans actually became masters of Jerusalem, because it was resolved to put CHRIST to death. With such perfect ease can heaven frustrate such wicked counsels, and make it clear that a policy, not grounded on the dictates of what is right, but on the suggestions of interest, is an expedient quite as useless, as it is immoral; one, which, instead of establishing kingdoms, will overthrow them; and, instead of enriching families, will impoverish them; and instead of making man happy, will cause his destruction. I shall therefore bestow all my labour this morn-

[1] "The sheep gate." Neh. iii. 1, 32: S. John v. 2.

ing on the explanation, for the benefit of the community, of this most important truth. I shall prove that what is not right can never be profitable; so that none of you may ever be so foolish as to believe that a wicked life can render you happy.

2. I cannot however, my hearers, but feel some shame, as I enter on my subject, that before such an audience as this it should be at all necessary to discuss this question; for it looks, as if a truth, which was quite clear to the Gentiles, was still a matter of doubt with Christians. How furiously did Cicero launch out against those teachers, who first dared to propagate in the world this particular doctrine, that a thing, which is not right, may yet be profitable! Did he not denounce them, as the men to disturb the peace of society, to cut asunder friendships, to ruin the commonwealth, to exterminate virtue, to revolutionize the world? He proceeded to overwhelm them with shame by relating an historical fact, which ought indeed to shame us even still more. It was this. Themistocles stated once in a speech delivered by him in the Athenian senate that he knew a secret of state-policy, which would be of the greatest advantage to the republic; but, not wishing openly to disclose what it was, he desired some one should be appointed, to whom he might communicate it in private. Aristides was chosen for this purpose, to whom Themistocles, without any reserve, revealed a stratagem, by adopting which the Athenians might destroy by fire the ships of the Lacedemonians, then their allies, but their great rivals. Having heard it, Aristides returned to the senators, who were all most anxiously expecting him, and without telling them the particulars of the counsel given, only informed them in a general way that "what Themistocles advised was indeed most advantageous to the state, but by no means an honest thing to do." What is it you say? the senators one and all, without regard to rank or order, immediately cried out, "This is quite impossible. If the counsel is not honest, neither can it in any sense be advantageous. That, which is not honest, cannot be profitable." And not even condescending to inquire what it was, they at once rejected it; so deeply was this principle implanted in their minds, as Cicero and

Plutarch both affirm, that "what was not just could, least of anything, be regarded as useful."

Now, if this truth was so obvious to the perception of Gentiles, how is it possible that we, who have such abundant proofs of its certainty, still refuse to be convinced of it? Those poor Gentiles were, after all, entirely ignorant of the fact that the destinies of every man lie in the hands of One GOD alone. They allowed gods many, most opposed, most hostile to each other; so that they did not go too far in their notions, when, out of so many, they expected that if one befriended virtue, another, not to be outdone, would patronize vice. Ay, what species of vice was there, which had not some god for its patron? Jupiter patronized adulterers; Mercury, robbers; Mars, man-slayers; Bacchus, drunkards; Venus, voluptuaries; Pluto, misers; so that their worshippers might fairly excuse themselves for regarding what is vicious to be occasionally conducive to happiness, when every vice claimed some god as its patron, and avowed friend. But we Christians, who believe that there is but One GOD in the world, and none but He, who acknowledge Him to be just as favourable to virtue as He is an open enemy to vice, how can we ever hope by any possibility to conciliate His regard by any wicked machinations? Does not then our prosperity in every instance, whether on a less or greater scale, depend upon His hand, so that not a breath of air stirs without His will, nor a single corn ripens unto harvest without His permission? This is undeniable. "In the hand of GOD is the prosperity of man." (Ecclus. x. 5.) Thus clearly does the preacher instruct us. "Prosperity and adversity, life and death, poverty and riches come of the LORD." (xi. 14.) Therefore what sort of policy, pray, tell me, is this; to seek to gain happiness by ill-using the Being, who dispenses it, by offending Him, of whose gift it comes? Does this in your opinion look like a clever contrivance—to heap insult, in order to procure favours—to pour contempt, in order to gain good graces?

3. You will answer that perhaps, in regard to GOD, an argument like this is of no weight. For, since He despises all earthly good things, it is by no means unlikely He will

let undeserving persons share in them. As to such good things, allow Him to place them under the care of what we call second causes, by which, without all this minute inquiry into character, they will be dispensed with the utmost liberality to such persons, as in the best exercise of their wits hit upon the most natural and surest methods of getting them. But gently, I must beg you; for your mode of reasoning is one quite as likely to mislead the wicked, as it certainly tends to flatter them: and therefore I feel it a duty to expose this fallacy, and to prevent its deceiving you. Only then tell me this: has not GOD always expressed His contempt for these earthly good things in the same way? Has not GOD always overruled these second causes on the same principle? There can be no doubt of it. And yet I find that wickedness has never helped any man in his pursuit, even of earthly happiness; whereas godliness, in this respect, has been of frequent and the greatest service to numbers.

This assertion, my hearers, may possibly sound strange in your ears. Did time permit, I would willingly undertake to prove it to your satisfaction by collecting the united testimony furnished in the lives of all the memorable men, who ever flourished from the beginning of the world. But as this undertaking, not to mention any difficulty attending it, would carry me too far, I must reduce it to narrower limits. When at the time of the world's great deluge, one family from among all the human family was to be saved, pray, inform me, what sort of a family was chosen? Was it the family of a wicked, or of a good man? At the burning of Sodom, when one family among so many inhabitants was to be rescued, what sort of family was preferred? Was it the family of a profligate, or that of a well-conducted man? Who ever in his day had more abundant possessions than an Abraham, than an Isaac, than a Job, than a Joseph; all of them most religious patriarchs? Was it wickedness, or innocency, that proved the best device in raising Joseph to the throne? I can readily believe, that, when with such noble firmness he resisted the allurements and importunities of his mistress, some of our modern time-servers would have

been ready to whisper in his ear—"Joseph, mind what you are now about. I doubt whether it will be for your interest to offend your mistress; a mistress, so rich; a mistress, so indulgent; a mistress, so powerful. Her husband is far away. This is an inner chamber. Who'll ever know it? It much concerns you to win the gracious smiles of a lady, who, like most of her sex, is headstrong in whatever she greatly likes, and who therefore must either supremely love, or supremely detest." And yet, could any counsel have been given Joseph more detrimental to his welfare? It is quite true that, in consequence of his declining to take such advice, he found himself a prisoner and in bonds: but then did not the prison conduct him to the palace? Did not these bonds form his diadem? Take another example. Had Moses, when a mere child, valued the crown which Pharaoh placed on his head, as Philo relates, had he been content to live at his court, to join in the ceremonies of his religion, would he have ever become that leader of so mighty a nation, that formidable object to so great a king? Moses refused to be his son-in-law, and was appointed to be his god; *See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.* (Exod. vii. 1.) After this, by whom were the blessings of this earth, so long the subject of promise, by whom were they finally obtained? By the men, who raised insurrection, or who worshipped the calf? Not a single man among these, although reckoned at six hundred thousand in number, ever set foot on that land. And who was it, in the times of the Judges, that overthrew so many strongholds, routed so many armies, reaped and brought home so many spoils, excepting a Joshua, a Caleb, an Othniel, a Gideon, and others resembling them in virtue, men, who as Ecclesiasticus noticed, prospered exceedingly, "that all might see that it is good to follow the LORD." (xlvi. 10.) Passing on to the time of the Kings, will you find any among them, who was better off on account of his wickedness, and rather not seriously damaged by it? Remind me but of one instance. If Saul won a sceptre for his goodness, did he not lose it for his sin? If David ever suffered a reverse in his fortune, was it not only on the occasion of his transgressing the Divine law? And how abundantly was Solomon blessed in that

memorable choice he made, when he preferred wisdom to riches! It was well for him that he never summoned to his closet on this matter any of those unprincipled councillors of state we are speaking of; because my firm belief is, that they would, one and all, have said to him, "Let your sacred Majesty pause and reflect: be not too hasty in forming your judgment, nor run any risk in the choice you are about to make. Of what consequence to you is so much wisdom? Will there be any lack in your government of learned doctors or of grave legislators, when controversies of religion, or points of law, have to be investigated? Literature is not the thing to make a king formidable. The wisest course you can pursue is to enlarge your territories, increase your revenue, replenish your exchequer; otherwise, you may some day be a laughing-stock to your enemies, when they will see you abounding in books, but ill off for money; very liberal with your ink, but sparing of your gold." This would undoubtedly have been the counsel of such abandoned politicians. But how much better was it for Solomon to be now guided by the dictates of rectitude, and not by the promptings of interest! And, if the immense prosperity of his reign began afterwards to decline, whence was it? Was it not because he went astray from the path of the Divine commandments? Examine at your leisure the whole list of his successors on the throne of Judah, you will find the most religious among them to be ever the most prosperous—a Hezekiah, a Jotham, a Jehoshaphat, and a Josiah. These enjoyed a good long life, these fabricated new cities, these accumulated vast wealth, these obtained glorious victories. The success, which attended some of these kings, varied in its tenour with a corresponding variation in their moral conduct; as may be instanced in Asa, in Joash, in Uzziah, and in Manasseh: but, as for the rest, both kings of Judah as well as kings of Samaria, those, who were always ill-conducted, were likewise always unhappy. Upon them came the rebellions, on them the defeats, on them the bereavements, on them the imprisonments, on them the slaughters. Need more be said? Is not such a testimony against them most clearly recorded in the Book of Judith? "Whilst they sinned not before their GOD, they

prospered. . . . Wheresoever they went in without bow and arrow, and without shield and sword, their GOD fought for them and overcame; and"—mark these remarkable words—"and there was no one that triumphed over the people, but when they departed from the worship of the LORD their GOD." (v. 21, 16, 17, Vulg.)

Now, my dear Sirs, I only want of you this information. Does GOD at the present time still govern the world, as He did formerly in the times of these kings, and by the same laws? or, has He changed His plan? Tell me, since their times has He conceived in His mind a new set of principles? Is He differently affected towards men in His will and purpose? Perhaps, as He once hated what is vicious, He may now have brought Himself to regard it with love. Is it so? Or, it may be that He has retired altogether from the management of the universe, and handed over the reins to a blind chance, or to an evil genius. Or, if it can be accounted for in no other way, certainly one of those lying deities we mentioned, who rival each other in the patronage of the wicked, must have crept into His seat. That His own Nature should have suffered any change—why the merest suspicion of such a thing, and much more the utterance of it, is an unheard-of blasphemy; *I am the Lord, I change not.* (Mal. iii. 6.) GOD Himself tells us this. I am what I am at first, I am what I am at first. This being certain, how can we ever trust in any wickedness to forward us in our pursuit of happiness? Is not this an over bold presumption on our part, just as if David never had our case in his view, when he said, *The countenance of the Lord is upon them that do evil,* (Ps. xxxiv. 17;) not *upon them,* to increase their riches, and honours, or to sanction the evil they do; but that He may *root out the remembrance of them from the earth?*

4. But, to obviate any objection you may ground upon my raking up arguments from one single nation—a nation too under the peculiar favour and government of the ALMIGHTY—let us adopt this method. Do you, on your side, put forward the wicked Herod, who on account of his advanced years, is called the Elder; and I, to match him, will place on the other side the most religious Constantine, him, who on ac-

count of his excellent character is called the Great. A bloody slaughter of innocent children is recommended to both these Princes, as a means, whereby one might secure his crown, the other preserve his life. Now pass your sentence. Was Herod the more prosperous by his impiety, or Constantine by his sense of justice? Listen, and I will tell you. Constantine, who declined having anything to do with the slaughter of these innocents, recovered from his dangerous illness, and moreover reigned in joy and in peace. Herod, who perpetrated it, shortly after forfeited his sceptre, and sunk under a most shocking disorder. His melancholy death is indeed notorious. His flesh, the prey of worms, actually, while he was yet alive, dropped off him shred by shred before his eyes; and the torture he experienced from the repeated attacks of spasms and convulsions was so intense, and such the disgust he felt at the intolerable stench of his own rotting carcase, that he attempted with a knife to hasten his dissolution. But not to dwell on this; if Constantine had in former years been harassed with the frequent rebellions of his subjects, he enjoyed afterwards a most blessed state of tranquillity. If Herod had in former years enjoyed any tranquillity, he was afterwards hard pressed with most frequent rebellions; for his own son Antipater had joined a conspiracy to poison him. Hence it came to pass that, whereas Constantine during his life was able to make Cæsars of his sons, Herod was forced to make prisoners of his. But why do I mention his making them prisoners? Was not that celebrated proverb then in every man's mouth, "It is better to be Herod's swine, than his son?" And what got the proverb into such wide circulation, but the fact that, in his character, as a Jew, he spared the swine, when, in his character, as a father, he murdered his own son? Again, if human happiness is to be regarded, as so much depending upon the people's love towards us, as, on the other hand, their dislike produces quite an opposite effect, what a difference was there here between Constantine and Herod! Who can number the statues, the arches, the trophies, that were erected to the honour of Constantine, and all in testimony of the love his people bare him? Certainly it was not so in the case of Herod: for a certain memorial,

something, I think, of a golden eagle, which he had put up in honour of himself, was razed to the ground and utterly demolished; the people taking this way of expressing how they hated him. To go further, Josephus, that laborious recorder of the antiquities of his country, relates that no one thing ever tormented this wicked prince so much, as the consciousness of the inexpressible delight his people felt in his calamities. It was owing to this that, just before his death, he artfully contrived to have all his nobles shut up under confinement in the Circus, and then gave an order that, the very moment he breathed his last, that moment they should be all put to the edge of the sword: for by this stratagem he would compel them to mourn at his death, a thing, which for love's sake they never would have consented to do. And now, after what you have heard, tell me, Sirs, which is the most sure and ready way, in your opinion, to become happy? that, adopted by Herod, when he slaughtered so many innocent babes; or that, which Constantine preferred, when he refused to murder them? The truth of the comparison is so self-evident that a man must be blind not to see it, or perverse indeed not to acknowledge its force.

5. More, however, remains to be said. Do we not trace in all the pages of all Ecclesiastical history, a full proof that prosperity, even when of the highest order, is far more attainable by honest measures, than by a crooked and corrupt policy? Contemplate for a moment those three most celebrated Emperors, Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens. What was the path, which conducted them all to the throne, but such a one, as worldly policy would have considered the most likely to have excluded them? When private officers, they all three resigned their commissions under Julian, that insolent apostate, not to comply with his absurd orders; and to that same court, from which they had been driven, as exiles, they soon returned as Emperors. And what human prudence would have sanctioned those admirable measures, with which the Emperor Honorius carried on his government.[1] Just think of this. On finding himself attacked by the barbarians and hedged in by a thousand hostile

[1] The inertness and imbecility of the character of Honorius and his complete

spears, what steps did he take? He straightway turned his arms against the heretics; and whereas by thus drawing off his soldiers he seemed to be weakening the defences of his empire, he in fact strengthened them. But who would not have supposed the reverse? Sundry murmurs must have pervaded his council-board. What sort of prudence is this? Was ever such a step taken? As if it did not suffice for the utter ruin of the empire to have the Goths and the Huns coming down, like a torrent, upon us from Spain; no, we must needs be provoking the Donatists from Africa to come and oppose us. It would rather be the part of prudence to devise every possible means of gaining their friendship and alliance, even were they to declare war against us at any similar crisis. What earthly reason have we then to go now and gratuitously provoke them, when they are giving us no trouble? Prevent by all means the wrongs done to our religion: but let it be our first care to make sure the interests of the commonwealth: otherwise, the commonwealth will be overthrown: and what then is to support our religion? Such is the turn, which the cabinet-discussion would probably have taken. But on what mistaken grounds! For, in the very teeth of such arguments, GOD showed us by the event that commonwealths are never more safe, than when men will hazard the most for the sake of religion. And did He not, to confirm this, fight with invisible weapons on the side of Honorius, and slay full two hundred soldiers of the Goths and Huns under the command of Rhadagaisus? Yea more, as if this did not satisfy Him, in the short compass of one year He put down in behalf of Honorius seven domineering aspirants to the empire, an Alaric, a Constantine, a Constantius, a Maximus, a Jovinus, a Sebastian, a Sarus, and

nonentity as an Emperor are to us well authenticated matters of history. The successes, obtained during his reign, are to be attributed to the good effects left by the vigorous administration of his father Theodosius, and, still more, to the great ability of his general and prime minister Stilicho. See Gibbon, Decline and Fall, &c., ch. xxx.; liv.; xlviii.; and Dean Milman's Latin Christianity, B. ii. c. 1; iv. 8; v. 4. But the translator does not pretend to correct the few historical errors of his author, any more than his faulty astronomy,—the fault of the times, when he lived. Refer to Serm. X., 1st Series, "The Soul's Flight from Earth to Heaven," p. 151.

others of this stamp, who, like so many rabid dogs, were rushing at his very life. This went so far, as to give occasion to a popular remark, that God and Honorius were contending with each other—Honorius, that he might exterminate the enemies of God; God, that He might exterminate the enemies of Honorius. But if, for once during his reign, the barbarians were triumphant, and succeeded in plundering Rome, when, let me know, did this happen? Was it not, when the unhappy man suffered himself to be talked over by the importunities of his courtiers, and granted both to the heathens, as well as to the heretics, the free use for a limited period of their several modes of worship? Rome, on this, immediately became a prey to the fury of the Goths. Her buildings were then in flames, her battlements were then razed to the ground, and then followed that most memorable sack of the city, which drew such a flood of tears from S. Jerome, when he wrote in a letter, "Through our sins the barbarians have become strong." And that the fact really was so is evident. For no sooner did Honorius perceive his mistake, than in his sorrow for it he rescinded his ill-advised order, and exerted himself to destroy the false faith and to spread the true one: and then it was, on his doing this, that his affairs underwent a change for the better: his principal enemies died, and those very Goths, who but recently were the conquerors of Rome, now became its defenders.

It would afford me pleasure, had I sufficient time, to review, one after another, the histories, with which I am familiar, of other princes. For I am quite confident that, among them all, not a single example could be found, giving the least encouragement to wickedness; while changes of fortune, such as I have mentioned, would appear in the lives of the two Theodosiuses, in an Arcadius, in a Justinian, in a Maurice, in an Heraclius, and in so many others, who, when they subjected religion to interest, got into trouble, and who only prospered, when they made interest subservient to religion. Not that I need trouble myself to procure the testimony of man, where we have the witness of God so conclusive to the point. For were not sorrow and affliction brought into the world by sin? Most certainly, the Preacher will answer;

"Death and bloodshed, strife, and sword, calamities, famine, tribulation, and the scourge, these things are created for the wicked, and for their sakes came the flood." (xl. 9, 10.) Because of sin, such a flood of sorrows has deluged the world: because of sin, wars; because of sin, poverty; because of sin, pestilence; because of sin, famine; because of sin, shame; because of sin, death. How then can we possibly believe that sin will provide us with any adequate means of escaping misery, and not rather lay us open to it, as being its very cause and occasion? No, no; sin can never help us. Should a wicked person ever reap any advantage from his wickedness, be promoted or honoured thereby, this will be purely accidental: and need I tell you that such effects, as arise from mere accident, never occur so frequently, as do those, which we can trace to some primary institution and design?

6. You will urge in reply, that arguments of this kind are all very fine; but that, for all this, you cannot run counter to what is evidenced by common sense and confirmed by every day's experience; which is, that the world has always abounded with wicked men, who have prospered: that this unquestioned fact has sharpened a thousand pens, and let loose as many indignant tongues, against Providence; that it is a truth, incapable of being denied, unless we first necessarily commit to the flames the records of nations, the speeches of orators, the satires of poets, and even the lamentations of the prophets themselves, whose complaint is, *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?* (Jer. xii. 1.) Not so fast, not so fast. By giving me this answer you suppose yourselves to have all of a sudden gained me over to your side, not to say, triumphed over me. And yet it proves nothing whatever against my assertion. The world has always abounded with prosperous wicked men. This proposition is most untrue: for miserable wicked men have comparatively much more abounded; although their prosperity may draw greater attention to it than their misery will, as being something more out of character. Is it however, your wish I should concede you this point, by way of favour? I will then; and pray what is the inference you are now going

to draw from it against my proposition? Therefore vice is profitable; therefore irreligion tells to a man's advantage; therefore, in order to be happy, what is wrong is useful—the doctrine in dispute between us. I deny your inference. Shall I tell you where lies the fallacy in your argument? It is here. You believe that such men were rendered happy by their wickedness; and I tell you, it is not so; but that it was in virtue of some good work, which, either in a Christian, or natural, or moral sense, they had performed; *To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.* (Prov. xi. 18.) So it is infallibly determined in the Book of Proverbs. And accordingly GOD has never once failed to bestow a certain reward on every good action whatsoever; as, on the other hand, He has always punished every bad action. He has been pleased to remunerate with a brief transient prosperity those, who were in other respects doomed to everlasting torments.[1]

The Goths were a cruel people; but they were great enemies to all sensuality. The Huns were brutish; but they were strangers to all effeminacy. The Vandals were rapacious; but they were zealots in abolishing idol-worship. On the contrary, the Romans, though superstitious to a degree,

[1] It seems to be the opinion of Segneri that outward good actions, performed by wicked men, are always rewarded by GOD in the way here mentioned: not that the reward is bestowed from any obligation of His justice in a way of merit, but *de congruo*, out of a principle of fitness in regard to His free and infinite bounty. We cannot admit that Prov. xi. 18 furnishes any ground for this notion: we must rather say, according to the 13th Article of our Church, that such works "have the nature of sin." The temporal blessings bestowed on the wicked are to be regarded, as parts of that "goodness of GOD, which leadeth unto repentance," (S. Matt. v. 45; Acts xiv. 17;) though in some, perhaps many, cases they are sent rather in judgment, than in mercy (see Ps. cvi. 14, 15; Rom. xi. 9.) Segneri states the above opinion more fully, in his beautiful "Manna of the Soul." (Medit. Nov. 23.) In another part of his "Quaresimale" he maintains that good works, performed by bad men, though admitted to be dead, and utterly useless for the purposes of Salvation, are yet so far pleasing to GOD, as to induce Him to bear with them in their sins with greater long-sufferance than, in the absence of such works, He would otherwise do. While we must refuse our assent to this proposition also, we may observe that in the place, where it occurs (Serm. xxviii. s. 10,) it has a tendency to weaken the main argument of that discourse, without the excuse of any call or need for its introduction.

were, beyond what we can well conceive, upright, liberal, trustworthy, temperate, generous, and kindly disposed to those they conquered. The Turks are remarkable for their subjection to their governors; the Swedes for their fidelity in the marriage-life: and what I assert generally of these nations you may apply to individuals, as for instance to a Hiero, to a Pisistratus, to a Marius, to a Gracchus, to a Sylla, and to other like personages, who for a time enjoyed prosperity in the midst of their wickedness. We grant them all to have been bad men; and yet we find in the lives of each a verification of that common saying, that great vices are very often coupled with great virtues. GOD, therefore, who has to punish their vices during such a prolonged period, would first assign to their virtues a brief limited reward; and so recompenses them, defective as they all are, with insignia of command, with diadems of royalty, with victories, with triumphs, with spoils and treasures, and temporary successes of this kind; as good as to say, with the crumbs from His table, the dust from off His feet, the sweepings and offscourings of His palace-floor. But is it not quite clear that this fact, so far from upsetting my argument, serves rather to establish it; for we shall find, on careful inquiry, that even among the Gentiles, as S. Augustine largely proves, there was a greater measure of prosperity, answerable to the greater virtues they possessed, which, if not true and real, were, at least, so in look and appearance.

7. But from this you must suppose me to be ignorant of the fact that GOD does frequently permit a person to gain some post of honour, or accession of wealth, by the assistance of his own wickedness. This no one can deny. Still I maintain that wickedness, even in these cases, must not be considered profitable; because, strictly speaking, the evil will always exceed the good derived from it. *The prosperity of fools,* as Solomon bears witness, *shall destroy them* (Prov. i. 32.) He does not say, *destroys* now, but *shall destroy them.* And why? Because this sort of prosperity does not always produce its fatal consequences instantly, but gradually. Oh, yes; I would only have you wait a little—yes, do wait—and you will see the final issue of that post of honour, which was

gained by oppressing the innocent; or of that wealth, which was accumulated by grinding the poor. Have you never read in Job that GOD sometimes makes a sport of men, and in this way *brings counsellors to a foolish end*, (xii. 17, Vulg.;) not to a foolish beginning—no, *to a foolish end?* He lets them go on, fabricating their huge tower of Babel; but He afterwards by confounding their languages scatters them over the world. He lets them go on, raising aloft their fine tower of Siloam; but He afterwards by reducing it to ruins buries them under it. Here then is the fallacy, which has betrayed many into an opinion, that sin is sometimes attended with prosperity, and which has moved the very Prophets tenderly to complain of GOD, and almost to impeach His Providence. These persons, acting under a delusion, have considered the beginning, but they have not with David looked on to the end: *Then understood I the end of these men*, (lxxiii. 17;) which is tantamount to saying, that they have stood gaping at the magnificent golden head of the lofty Babylonian Colossus, and, while fixed in wonder and absorbed in delight, they have not cast their eyes lower down to observe its feet of clay. I have more to add in proof of this; so attend.

8. If ever, after the birth of CHRIST, there was a succession of men, who managed by unfair means to raise themselves to great wealth and power, it was most certainly the Greek Emperors, or we will call them, if you prefer it, the Greek Tyrants. But now tell me; what other empires in the world have equalled theirs in supplying our theatres with such numerous displays of greater prosperity on the one hand, or calamity on the other. Nicephorus I. succeeded at last by means of his treacheries and perjuries to usurp the empire, when he drove Irene the rightful Sovereign from the throne. But what good was this to him? From the series of disasters, which overtook him, he became such an object of reproach even to himself, as to get the name of a modern Pharaoh, hardened in his plagues; and at last, having been defeated and put to death by the Bulgarians, he gave his enemies occasion to convert his skull into a cup, out of which,—whether in joy or in scorn I cannot say,—all the leading men of their army drank. Stauracius by means of

an illicit marriage, and Leo the Armenian by means of an open insurrection, succeeded in settling themselves in authority; but what time transpired, before on this very account both of them were massacred, one in battle, the other before an altar? Michael Balbus contrived with his famous conspiracy to exchange a prison for a throne, upon which he received the homage of the people, while the chains were even still about his neck and the fetters on his feet; but, as he was emboldened by his great prosperity to marry a virgin devoted to GOD, all Sclavonia on a sudden rose in arms against him. On a sudden all his army was routed, and, as this failed to lead him to repentance, he died a slow lingering death of a disorder in the stomach. Theophilus for certain political reasons managed almost entirely to rid the land of image-worship; but soon afterwards he died of anger and mortification, on account of his deplorable defeat by the Saracens. Michael III. regarded as a second Nero for his lust and cruelty, succeeded in making away with his guardians, and in banishing his mother, that so he might rule uncontrolled, just as he liked: but for this how fiercely was the popular indignation kindled against him! and what rebellions were the consequence, under which he at last met his death, while he lay overcome with wine and fast asleep. Alexander succeeded in plundering the Sacred altar, thence to transport the gold of the sanctuary to his own treasury; but he immediately lost his senses, and before the end of the first year of his government died of a broken blood-vessel. How shall I speak of Romanus I.? He managed by a most astute piece of cunning that his son—a mere child—should, by the expulsion of the lawful possessor, be placed on the patriarchal seat of Constantinople; but in the course of the same year he also was expelled from the Imperial throne and shipped off to a desert island. In like manner Romanus II., he, too, in his thirst for power succeeded by the use of poison in hastening his own father out of the world; but very soon after he was himself despatched on the same journey, and by poison too. Michael Paphlagonius by unfair manœuvres got possession of the Empire; but very shortly after the devil got possession of him; nor was any

amount of exorcising or almsgiving sufficient to release him for the rest of his life. Michael Calaphates gained his end in banishing the Empress that he might reign alone; but he was unexpectedly made prisoner by the people, who stoned him, put out his eyes, and dragged him, while yet alive, through the city. To the same dismal end came Diogenes and Andronicus, both intruders upon the Imperial throne; one, by the favour of an illicit concubinage; the other, by the strong arm of a barbarous assault.

Let me now have your answer. Is it your opinion that the deeds of wickedness, by which these persons obtained their ends, can in any sense be pronounced successful? Speak out. Would you be content yourself to enjoy their profits, under a liability of equally sustaining their losses? Is there one among you so foolish as to consider their lot enviable? Now then settle it well in your minds, that such has been the universal lot of all, who have laboured to benefit themselves by wicked means. *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them*—yes, Sirs; *the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* Really it does not require so much labour to prove how true this is. It is published in all books; it is proclaimed in all ages: all the kingdoms of the earth give this unanimous decision in favour of what is right. *Righteousness exalteth a nation.* Listen, all of you: what words could be found more in unison with my argument? and they proceed from the lips of a Solomon. *Righteousness exalteth a nation. Righteousness* is that, which raises, which exalts, which regenerates the community. And what is it, which reduces them to misery? Nothing but sin; *Sin maketh nations miserable,* (Prov. xiv. 34, Vulg.;) so in another place he says, *A man shall not be established by wickedness,* (xii. 3;) and in another, *Transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness,* (xi. 6;) and in another, *The wicked shall fall by his own wickedness,* (xi. 5;) and in another, *He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity.* (xxii. 8.) The Book of Wisdom certifies us of the same result; "Ill dealing shall overthrow the throne of the mighty." (v. 23.) Nor does the Preacher hold a different language. He has indeed bequeathed to us this most serious warning that the great men of this world are often made

beggars and outcasts. "The kingdom is translated from one people to another." (Ecclus. x. 8.) Because of what? Because of the exactions, the profligacy, the fraud, with which it was administered; "Because of unjust dealings, oppressions, injuries, and riches got by deceit." What say you to this? Will you allow yourselves to be so beguiled by the deluding promises of sin, as, while you gaze with fixed admiration on its elevations, to pay no attention to its rapid declines? Oh, cease ye for ever from its base expedients; and be assured (whatever some may teach in their pestilent and wicked publications) be assured, I say, that what is not just and honest can never be profitable. Isaiah declares of these wise-headed plotters of iniquity, *They weave the spider's web, their works are works of iniquity, their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity.* (lix. 5, 6, 7.) Let these ill-advised advisers keep for their own use their own accursed motto—*it is expedient.* We prefer the magnanimous saying of Mattathias, that noble Maccabee; "God be merciful unto us. It is not profitable for us to forsake the law and the justices of God." (1 Macc. ii. 21, Vulg.) Let wickedness make us all the promises it pleases: we will not trust it. Never can it answer our purpose to abandon reason for appetite, religion for interest, duty for feeling, God for any one. "It is not profitable for us to forsake the law and the justices of God." What then will profit us? Godliness will. *Godliness is profitable unto all things,* says the Apostle, (1 Tim. iv. 8;) because it is accompanied with the promise of a blessing not in a future state alone, where the Christian will obtain his highest reward, but even here in this present life—*having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* Let us rest a moment.

The Second Part.

9. I have thus far conducted my argument, as if we had no other life to live, than the one we are spending at present upon the earth. But how so? There is a Paradise, my dear Sirs, in store for us: there is also a Hell. Unless we are

atheists, we must acknowledge this. For this reason, were vice to be in this world—what I am far from granting—generally attended with happiness, this fact would not entitle it to be considered beneficial . . . . Oh, the poor things we are, to think so highly of what is temporal, not to consider at all what is Eternal! *What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* O! saying, worthy to be proclaimed aloud from every pulpit in our land; yea, to be carved in large characters in all our dwellings and grand apartments, so as never to be out of sight! Supposing us, beloved hearers, to have gained all our ends by dint of our wicked machinations, what should we have gained? *What does it profit?* We should have gained some few years of ease and content; but in exchange we should have bartered an Eternity.

Oh, that it were in my power this morning to open all Hell to your inspection, to exhibit to you those depths of horror, those dungeons of despair! And what then? I would proceed to summons, one after another, all the persons, who, when in this world, worshipped none other god but their own interest; I would constrain them by my affecting and solemn appeals to answer me—whether their former happiness yields them now any satisfaction of mind? Where, Oh where are you, ye Jeroboams, ye Tiberiuses, ye Julians, ye Henries, and all the men of your school? Although you are now robed in flames, girded with vipers, and laden with heavy chains, yet come forward. The very sight of you will teach us a most useful lesson. What have you to say for yourselves now? In your life-time, you found a way to gratify to the full every demand of your corrupt self-will, saying among yourselves, "Let our strength be the law of justice." (Wisd. ii. 11.) Is not this true? Never did you stand in fear of man, never did you show respect to God; totally absorbed in your own family-interests you scrupled at nothing, in order to advance them, whether by oppressing the poor, slandering the innocent, betraying your friends, ruining your opponents, by shedding the blood of your people, and turning the world upside down. Well, how does the remembrance of your past misdeeds affect you now? Do you feel

that, in consequence of them, the ice about you is rendered less chilling, or the flame about you is less furious? You remember how your palaces were crowded with courtiers! how many came to pay you homage in the streets! how many to shout your praises in the triumphal processions! Some were pourtraying you on the painted fresco, others were representing you on the solid marble; and, as in good omen of your prosperity, I know not whether more human lives were offered every day in the wars because of you, or more brute victims slain on the altars. What now are you *profited* by a happiness of this nature? What—tell me—does it all *profit* you? Were it now in your power to go back to the world, there to resume your bodies, to live over your lives again, what sort of happiness would you prefer? Would you ever make your entrance again into the same palaces? Would you ever mount again the same thrones? Oh, ye Heavens! for I seem as if now I heard these wretches, in the midst of their blasphemies, breaking out with howlings by way of speech, and using groans for want of articulation. What palaces, what thrones do you speak of? Cursed be the hour, in which we set our feet upon them! Cursed be those menials, who gave effect to our desires! Cursed be the very stars, that raised us to such an eminence! Ye woods, caverns, rocks, and sepulchres of the dead! to you we all would rush for concealment, could we now return to the world. Such, methinks, would be the answer of these wretches. And Oh, what a true answer! *Surely they have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.* Those words of Jeremiah I would fain cry aloud in their ears; *Surely they have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit.* (xvi. 19.) Sad inheritance indeed for them! How infinitely better for them all, had they been born servants and slaves, than ever to have inherited such greatness! "Where are the princes of the heathen?" (Baruch iii. 16.) Where are those Gentile rulers, whom I have mentioned; "who ruled the beasts upon the earth," who kept so many horses for their carriages; "who had their pastime with the fowls of the air," who kept so many dogs for their field sports; "who hoarded up silver and gold wherein men trust, and made no end of

their getting," who, to aggrandize their families, feared not to throw entire cities into mourning? "Where are they?" Where are they? The scene has closed upon them. They are utterly lost and undone. "They are vanished and gone down to the grave, and others are come up in their stead." (Baruch iii. 17, 19.) They left their purple and gold to their successors, and themselves descended to their dwelling-place in Hell-fire. Such is the end of all those, who have not framed their lives by the law of God. Happy for us, if we are wise enough to learn a useful lesson at their expense! But such is our blindness that we envy them their former prosperity, and lose sight of their present suffering. *What shall it profit a man—what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* Is it not a matter of faith, that, to whatsoever degree men may enrich themselves with thrones, with imperial mantles, with diadems, with sceptres, with robes, with mitres, with crosiers, all these, irrespective of quantity, being bound up together, and with them the loss, entailed by them upon one single soul, the proportion between the two would be far less than the difference between the gain of a small plot of waste land, and the loss of a Monarchy exceeding that of Augustus? How then can we ever regard wickedness as conducive to happiness, when it is closely accompanied with a loss so heavy? I will put it plainly in the words of Eucherius; "There can be no room whatever for *profit*, if the way to get it must be at the cost of *the soul*."

10. But you will tell me that my mouth this morning has been full of nothing, but of Princes and Princesses; and that most among you, who chiefly require my preaching, are not of this exalted position, and consequently are not exposed to such tremendous dangers: you will say that your measures of expediency at the very worst do not go beyond tripping up some rival at court, or overreaching some party in a legal contract; and that for faults, like these, you need not fear so great miseries temporal or Eternal. Say you so? Would to God your inference was true! But, my dear hearers, this is the worst thing in your case, that for the sake of a mere trifle you will offend God, outrage His laws, trample His blood under your feet. Were we for the sake of some very material

advantage to trample upon Him in this manner, we should be committing sin: none will dispute this: but if for the sake of so trifling a gain we trample upon Him, how much is our sin aggravated! And is not this the very complaint He brings against us by the mouth of Ezekiel, *They have violated* (dishonoured) *Me among My people for a handful of barley and a piece of bread* (xiii. 19, Vulg.)? as if by these few words He would have said; Listen, ye Heavens, listen, thou earth, and, ye gloomy depths, listen also. This people of Mine, whom I love with such tender affection, who have received from Me such distinguished favours, whom I have delivered from such abject slavery, whom I have raised to such commanding power, this people of Mine has provoked Me—I wish you to know it—has most ungratefully ill-used and degraded Me. And for what object, think you? Was it to secure to themselves the spoils of the vanquished enemy, as Saul did? This I should not have considered so great a disgrace. Was it to usurp the property of some inoffensive neighbour, as Ahab did? This I should not have so sorely resented. Was it to assume the government of some vacant principality, as Athalia did? Such insolence I should not have taken so much to heart. Was it to satiate the covetous longing after another's wealth, as Gehazi did? Even this would not raise a blush on My cheek. What then is the offence, which My people has done unto Me? It is for this; *for a handful of barley and a piece of bread*—yes, I repeat it—*for a handful of barley and a piece of bread,* for so paltry a gain as this these ingrates have cast Me behind their backs, uttered enormous falsehoods, coined shameful calumnies, and weaved against me the most treasonous machinations. And am I to bear this?

To this effect the Lord complained in times past: how, think you, will He speak of us now? Would you ascertain this, only pay a visit to the most crowded parts of our city; enter the markets, inspect the shops, give a look into the banks, and learn in those places how for any trivial inducement people will even commit sins, that are deadly. Within those doors what lies, what quarrels are to be heard! What impostures and frauds there lurk concealed! And will God, who is present in all such places, bear tamely the affronts

done Him for such insignificant causes? What, if He will, by way of an instance, punish so severely the man, who perjures himself, in order to gain some costly treasure; will He not still more severely punish the man, who does the same, in order to get a farthing? Why, the very heathens allowed that an act of sin was rendered far less aggravated, when committed for the sake of some greater advantage thereby to be obtained: hence it was remarked by one of them, that "if justice is to be outraged at all, let it be, at least for the sake of a Kingdom." Sin at no time whatever is lawful; but, when there is a less inducement to commit it, other matters attending it being on a par, the fault is always rendered the greater; because God is then outvalued by some petty lucre, some unworthy, perhaps some contemptible, object. Wherefore let us conclude the matter thus. If sorrow will be the portion of those, who, when in Hell, shall discover what it was, for the sake of which they lost their God—as for the sake of some fair province, some vast principality—what will be the fate of others, when brought to feel the same loss?—but a loss incurred by them for what? For the sake of some filthy gain of a few pence by usury, for the sake of a false money-bill, or a fictitious mortgage, or some of those fine clever methods of transacting business, which are better known to yourselves than they are to me. Will not these wretches howl with a desperation, far beyond that of Esau and Lisimachus, those two most miserable vendors, one of a Birthright, the other of a Kingdom? In losses of the same character, a wicked policy of self-interest is sure to involve us, one and all, whether we be high or low, rulers or subjects, if it once obtains the mastery over us. Reflect for yourselves, whether there be any profit sufficient to compensate for such heavy losses; and then decide whether, in order to be happy, it is a good thing to be wicked.

SERMON XXXIV.

THE EVIL OF SIN INFERRED FROM THE MEEKNESS OF CHRIST.

[PALM SUNDAY.]

S. MATT. XXI. 5.

"TELL YE THE DAUGHTER OF SION, BEHOLD, THY KING COMETH UNTO THEE, MEEK."

1. IF there is one thing, which tends beyond any other to illustrate the exceeding vanity of mortal men, it is, in my opinion, their way of priding themselves on magnificent showy titles. Sapor, king of Persia, when he wrote to the Emperor Constantine, did not hesitate to call himself the Brother of the Sun. Soliman, the lord of the Turks, styled himself the Conqueror of the world, the Subduer of the earth; and Salamander, Sultan of Egypt, entitled himself the President of Hell, the Master of Paradise. . . . . Numberless other instances, some of them indeed far more absurd, might be adduced, in proof of what I say: but this is much to be noted in most of them, that human pride has always aspired to titles of some terrifying import, just as if the glory of man consisted in acts of conquest, violence, and devastation. What then has this our LORD JESUS CHRIST to do among us to-day, since on His triumphant entrance into Jerusalem He must fain wish, like other people, to have His proper title assigned Him? Let us see. What name shall it be? Shall it be the Terrible? the Tremendous? Oh, the folly of supposing

anything of the kind! The meek, the gentle King.—This is the title in which He would rather glory; *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek!* Accordingly, observe it well. He has no wish to signalize His appearance on a triumphal car, drawn by tigers with Caligula, or drawn by lions with Mark Antony, or drawn by elephants with Pompey, or drawn by stags with Aurelian; but He prefers a poor homely beast for His conveyance. Nor has He any wish that scenic representations of desolated cities should move in procession before Him; nor that troops of captive nations should bring up the rear: and, if He must have some chaplet to adorn His brow, let it be the leaf of the palm enwreathed with the olive. Rejoice therefore, my hearers; for in this case our God is not, as many imagine, a God of wrath: no; He is all compassion, He is all condescension, He is all amiability. And so my pains will not be wasted this evening, if, by way of conforming to His manner of spirit, I show you how singularly appropriate is this title of meekness; *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek;* a title, which virtually assures us that He delights more in tolerating than in resenting an injury done Him; that His joy is to do us good, rather than afflict us: in a word, that His nature much more inclines Him to grant mercy, than to exact punishment. This engaging view of His character will ultimately lead me to a practical conclusion, one, which perhaps will take you by surprise, but which will certainly tend to the edification of all those, who will give me an attentive hearing.

2. At once then to start on our subject. Pray, what argument, think you, I shall use, as my first method of convincing you of the truth before us? It is an argument you will least expect—God is infinite in Power. Will you not readily grant Him to be the Mighty Lord, so strong and powerful as to cause, when He goes forth, all the foundations of the earth to quake under His feet; that, if He look angry, the sun immediately turns pale with dread; that, if He give the least intimation of a command, the ocean submissively retreats before Him; that the couriers, by whom He despatches the decrees of His will through the universe, are the winds; that He makes the thunder His voice, and the light-

ning His sword; and that He has marshalled under His standard the hail and the snow, the storms and the tempests. Well then; all this, I assert, is good news for us: for it follows from this that to punish us must be something most abhorrent to His nature. I beg your attention to this.

Aristotle teaches, and with him Plutarch and Seneca, all of them firstrate moral philosophers, that the tendency a man has quickly to resent an injury, proceeds from his own weakness; "Anger chiefly springs from weakness." For the weak are more inclined to suspect that they will be looked down upon by the world, should they ever forgive an injury; and, should they not demand satisfaction and revenge, they fear it would be ascribed to cowardice on their part, and not to clemency: to constraint, and not to their own free will. Hence you observe that the female sex is by nature the most quick in taking offence. "No anger exceeds that of a woman;" because a woman is by nature the most subject to infirmity. For the same reason sickly persons are sooner exasperated, than strong; aged persons sooner, than young; persons in trouble sooner, than persons in prosperity: and it is a well ascertained fact that, among animals, wasps, vipers, and toads are most sensitive, and eager to attack any persons, who annoy them. But the man, who excels in strength, does not behave in this manner. In proportion to his very greatness is the readiness he feels to be pacified. He, who is conscious of the vast power he possesses, knows that he can have his revenge at any time it suits him: consequently he often defers it, he often dissembles it; and he considers it quite beneath him to pick a quarrel with an inferior. This was the very point, which the Emperor Adrian once so clearly illustrated. At the height of his grandeur, he met a man, who had insulted him, when he was nothing more than a common subject. All the revenge Adrian now took consisted in simply saying to the man, "*Evasisti!*" "Thou hast escaped!" Need I here add the dictum of S. Ambrose? "It is a law of nature, not indeed inscribed on tables, but impressed on the hearts of men, that they, who have the greatest power, should show most mercy, when they have to punish." A noble-minded lion takes no

notice of the barking of every wretched puppy. We all know perfectly well, that by how much the Heavens are higher in their spheres, by so much they are the less subject to agitation; and that the deepest seas are found to be the most tranquil.

Return we to the point under discussion. Have you not already granted that GOD is infinite in power? It necessarily follows that He must also be supremely disposed to show mercy; that to do us harm and to punish us must therefore be quite alien from His nature; and, on the other hand, to pardon and bless us something truly congenial. This, my hearers, is indeed a sublime reflection. I will be candid enough to acknowledge whence I have borrowed it; from the eleventh chapter of the Book of Wisdom. The author pleads with GOD in these terms; "Thou hast mercy on all; for Thou canst do all things"—not because Thou lovest all things, but "canst do all things." (xi. 23.) This accounts for that peculiar phrase in the general Confession of the Church. We do not there address Him, as being good, as being merciful, but as being Omnipotent—*I confess to Almighty God.* (Brev. Rom.) Hereby we would put Him on His honour, by reminding Him that all rigour and sternness on His part is incompatible with an infinite power, and that to deal severely with us would be, as Job plainly told Him, to *break a leaf driven to and fro, and to pursue the dry stubble.* (xiii. 25.)

3. It is now triumphantly proved, as the groundwork of my argument, that it does not accord with the Divine will and pleasure to inflict punishment. Why indeed should this ever be questioned, when Isaiah speaks so clearly and emphatically on the subject, as to place it beyond controversy? The prophet denounces the final vengeance of GOD against His people; *The Lord shall be wroth.* But scarcely were the words out of his mouth, than, allowing such wrath to be a part of the Divine conduct, he yet enters his protest against it, as being contrary to the Divine nature; an extraordinary proceeding on His part—*His strange work, His strange act.* (xxviii. 21.) So true it is, as S. Jerome goes on here to say; "It is no work of GOD to destroy His own creatures"—"To punish sinners is revolting to the feelings

of their SAVIOUR." Is GOD a Creator? if so, He can never find pleasure in the sufferings of those He has created. Is GOD a SAVIOUR? If so, He can never wish evil to those, whom He came to save.

4. Were we now to combine with the authority of the Prophet some curious and shrewd intimations of the same truth, it might interest you: therefore attend. From what circumstance would it be inferred that a commander was about against his own will to destroy and lay waste a city? From seeing him first demand, whether it would surrender on conditions. From what would men infer that a surgeon was against his own will employing the lancet and caustic with his patient? From seeing him first try, whether he could not cure him with emollients. Whence might we be sure that a gardener had against his own will condemned a tree to the axe and saw? From seeing him first essay whether he could make it shoot again by help of the pruning knife. Just so, any person, who first applies remedies, clearly shows by so doing his unwillingness to inflict punishments. Tell me then candidly; what method ever was there of gentle treatment at all likely to win the heart of man, which GOD has not tried, before He proceeded to lay hold on the scourge and the rod? How rich are the blessings He bestows upon us! How strong the inducements He suggests to our minds! What pious emotions does He not awaken within us? What bright examples does He not place before our eyes? What kind proposals does He not make us for our advantage? *Gracious and righteous is the Lord*, says the Psalmist, (xxv. 8:) not righteous and gracious, but *gracious and righteous;* because GOD is *gracious* towards sinners, before He is *righteous*.

I trace a very interesting distinction between two country sports; I mean, between fishing and hunting, both of them pursued, we know, with one and the same object, that of securing the prey. But by what different methods in each case is the object pursued! The fisher studies to allure the fish by means of what is agreeable, to bait his hook with some pleasant preparation of their favourite food; and, so far is he from wishing in the slightest degree to alarm them,

that, on the contrary, he takes care they should not see him, and even lays his lines in the obscurity of night. At a time, when all is hushed and still, he conceals his nets, and covers his hooks, and so contrives to get the fish voluntarily to come out, draw near, and surrender themselves his captives: insomuch that they are often caught and actually imprisoned, without their once being conscious of it. Such is the deception practised in fishing. The hunter does not go to work in this way. He takes the field accompanied with a noisy clatter of dogs and horses; he makes his horn resound; and, as though his design were to wage war against the forests, he challenges with his loud vociferations the bears to rush out of their dens and the wild boars out of their thickets; he couches the lance; he is ready with the spear; he stops the way with his fire-arms; and, having succeeded in rousing the wild beasts from their lairs, he stands awaiting them at the gap; there he attacks and wounds them, he hinders their advance, and mauls them in such a merciless way, that his own hands and clothes are often discoloured with their blood. The main difference between these several methods, adopted by the fisherman and the hunter, will be found, on consideration, to consist in this; the one, in pursuit of the prey, employs love; the other, force. Now God, in His desire to win souls, pursues both these methods. First, He acts the part of a fisherman. For He studies to win us to Himself with kind offers, with promises, with the pleasant bait of His graces and favours: and, when all these fail, then, and not till then, has He recourse to the contrary plan exemplified by the hunter. Then He alarms us; then He puts us all in a terrible consternation; then He wages a kind of sanguinary warfare against us, and succeeds in bringing us down. Perhaps you attach no credit to what I am saying. Hear it then, if you will, from Jeremiah; *Behold, saith the Lord, I will send for many fishers, and they shall fish them; and after will I send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them.* (xvi. 16.) Have you marked the expression, *after?* First, saith the Lord, I will try to *fish them;* that is, My first experiment upon them shall be with instances of kindness; first, I will employ gentle means—*gracious is the Lord:* should these fail, then *after,* as in just resentment,—

righteous is the Lord; I will avail myself of the hunter's plan. I will draw blood, and give them no quarter.

Now, in confirmation of all this, I wish you to turn to the Scriptures.[1] Search them through. God ordained that the seven famous years of plenty should come first in Egypt, *and after* He had them succeeded by seven years of famine. He first permitted David to flourish in prosperity, *and after* He afflicted him with pestilence. He first bestowed on the family of Hezekiah a vast treasure of wealth, *and after* plundered it of all. He first presented Ahab's family with a numerous offspring, *and after* He gave it over to the edge of the sword. Even from the beginning it was so. God first endeavoured to *fish* out Adam and Eve with the luscious bait of those precious fruits of the earth, which He provided for their enjoyment in Paradise. He first feasted them with delights; He first gifted them with knowledge; He first prepared them for immortality; *and after,* when by this stratagem He was quite unable to catch them, He went and *hunted* them; He *hunted* them out of Paradise, and by dogging them close at their heels with those twin bloodhounds, labour and sorrow, He succeeded in capturing them at last. Why should I here say more? All sinners, would they only speak the truth, will bear witness to the fact of God's having usually, in their case, employed gentle, before He has used severe, measures. Can it then admit of a doubt that the latter must be less pleasing to Him, and that, as the author of the imperfect Commentary said, "He is always more ready to do us good, than harm;" or that, as we may now put it, His natural instinct leads Him to prefer the office of the seductive fisherman to that of the murderous hunter? Hence it arises that, wherever these two

[1] Truth and candour forbid us to shut our eyes to the fact, that, throughout these sermons, the preacher addresses his hearers, as persons possessing the Scriptures, and indulged with their free use. This, of course, must have been subject to the conditions and restrictions imposed by the Council of Trent; but it is difficult to conceive how persons, the generality of whom were evidently of such immoral lives, could have obtained the Church's permission to read for themselves the Word of God. Let full credit, notwithstanding, be allowed to the undisputed fact as here stated, and let thanks be awarded to our excellent preacher for turning it, as he continually does, to such a good account.

words *mercy* and *judgment* are united in Scripture, *mercy* invariably stands first; *God shall send forth His mercy and truth,* (Ps. lvii. 4;) *His mercy and truth who shall search?* (lxi. 7, Vulg.;) *I will sing of mercy and of judgment,* (c. 1;) and yet nearer to our point, *To tell of Thy loving kindness early in the morning, and of Thy truth in the night season,* (xcii. 2;) for we must know that, if His chastisements are on the road, they will arrive in the *evening:* His mercies are ever first to come forth at the *morning-dawn.*

5. To proceed. When a person has some object really at heart, he is not deterred from it by any trifling obstacle cast in his way. No, Sirs; he rather overcomes difficulties, and triumphs over opposition. Whereas, for what very slight reasons will GOD refrain from punishing men! Every plea suffices Him, every shadow of a pretence weighs with Him; nor is it scarcely possible to raise any suggestion, however trivial, to which He will not defer. With your permission, we will produce a very remarkable instance of this. The ALMIGHTY, unable to endure any longer the outrageous bad conduct of His people in the wilderness, where they were continually provoking Him with their lusts, seditions, blasphemies, and numerous excesses, had it often in His mind to destroy them; but, as often, Moses opposed Him in His design. And know you how he managed to do it? He represented to Him that, on hearing of this destruction, the Egyptians would taunt Him with it, and charge Him with having insidiously decoyed the Hebrews from the cities to the forests, and from society to solitude, for the purpose of killing them; *Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did He bring them out to slay them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?* (Exod. xxxii. 12.) O Moses, Moses, think on what thou sayest. Is this plea of thine grounded on common sense? Is it the sort of reason one ought to produce before GOD? before an intelligence so sublime, before infinite Wisdom itself? What! Is any one to swerve from his duty, in order to obviate the unfriendly comments of other men? On this principle a king must desist from punishing the rebel. On this principle a judge must desist from condemn-

ing the guilty. On this principle a commander must desist from putting down the insubordinate. Rather let people, whosoever they be, make as many comments, as they like, on our behaviour: these are but mere passive offences, as we call them, and the man, who at all regards them, is not the man to perform any good or great action. And yet—marvellous to say—so frivolous a pretext as this sufficed, on every occasion of its being used, to appease the anger of God. But how are we to account for this? Was it, forsooth, because He attached great importance to gossip of this kind? Nothing more improbable. Many Jews murmured against Christ, because He healed on the Sabbath day. But what then? Did He therefore discontinue to heal? They murmured against Him, because He admitted publicans to terms of repentance. What then? Did He therefore discontinue to admit them? They murmured against Him, because He received a Magdalene with condescending favour. But what? Did He on this account receive her no more? By no means. Pay attention to a very proper observation, that has been made; namely, that the murmurings of the people succeeded in preventing God from pouring out His judgments, but they were not able to restrain Him in the exercise of His mercy. Is it not perfectly clear that this could only arise from the fact of His being quite as unwilling to pour out His judgments, as inclined by nature to exercise mercy? *His wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and in His pleasure is life.* (Ps. xxx. 5.)

6. But the matter does not end here. It would not be much, after all, were God, submitting to any little restraint offered Him, to cease from punishing us. Here is the grand consideration, that He Himself should go anxiously looking about for some one to restrain Him; *I sought for a man among them, who should make up the hedge.* (Ezek. xxii. 30.) Oh, the sore anguish He feels, when He has to seek in vain! Oh, the transports of grief, into which this carries Him! Thus He speaks of Himself in Isaiah; *He saw that there was no man, He saw that there was no man.* How is He distressed at this! *He stands astonished because there is none*

to oppose Himself, (Isa. lix. 16, Vulg.,) as if it was said, "because there is none to *supplicate*," as Pagninus renders the passage; "because there is none to *intercede*," as the Septuagint translates it. Judge now for yourselves. Is this a GOD, who delights in pouring out His fury? Take the case of any man in a violent fit of passion; you cannot offend him more seriously, than by attempting to restrain him, just as he is on the point of taking his revenge. Were you at such a time to try to wrest the weapon out of his hand or to confine his arm, it would be little less than to expose yourself rashly to the blow intended for another. You may believe this on the authority of Jonathan. As we all know, he was the friend of David, his confidential friend. Therefore, when he saw with what fury his father Saul raged against him, he naturally thought it his duty to interfere and to pacify him; and wisely availing himself of an opportunity, favouring his object, as they sate at table—a time indeed the most propitious—he made bold to put in a word or two, on behalf of his dear friend. *Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?* (1 Sam. xx. 32.) Would you believe it? His own death was the reply he got to his question. Although he was the favourite son, the heir, the successor in the kingdom, yet this consideration by no means deterred Saul from immediately seizing a javelin, that he might plunge it in his bosom and kill him. *And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him.* I find a parallel to this in the case of the Visigoths, who barbarously murdered their King Ataulph, for striving to induce them to lay down their arms in a war against the Romans, for whose blood they were then thirsting. And so I read of the Danes, that they treacherously slew their king Henry the Ninth, because he earnestly wished to live in peace with the Vandals, whose hostility they desired to provoke. And other like instances might be mentioned. Nor ought these cases to cause you any surprise.

Have you never watched the headlong descent of some cataract from the mountain's brow, when with its distant bellowing thunder it threatens to lay waste the country, to destroy the harvest, to make havoc of the sheep-folds?

Well; but which, of them all, is doomed first to experience its impetuous fury? Why, that rampart, that attempts to arrest its progress. Here it is, that its raging waters swell and expand; here it foams, here it maddens, here it roars, here it boils over with exasperation: nor is it pacified, until, by putting forth all its strength to the effort, it has dashed and driven that rampart far away: and, whereas it would in the first instance have done far less mischief to the country around by its hostile aggression, now, on its perceiving an attempt made to arrest it, it becomes more outrageous and unrelenting; and, like a conqueror in the fulness of his pride and insolence, heaps outrage on outrage, adds death to death. It is precisely so among men. There is no one thing, which a man in a heat of passion will resent more, than the appearance of some third person, who gets up to throw some obstacle in his way. Intercessors he feels to be something intolerable. Friendly mediators are his perfect disgust: and so he verifies the truth of Seneca's aphorism: "In anger, the worst thing is that it won't be restrained." What ought we now to say of God, knowing, as we do for a certainty, that He not only loves to be thwarted in His design of executing wrath against us, but goes about in search Himself, actually goes Himself to find some rampart to resist Him? *I sought for a man among them, who would make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found none.* Shall we now affirm that it is any pleasure to Him to have to punish us? Shall we say that He takes a delight in doing so? Shall we say that He loves it? Or, shall we rather confess that it is only on compulsion that He is angry against us? *Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God.* (Ezek. xviii. 23.)

7. All this, you will say, is very true; but then, in this case, how are we to understand all those awful images and emblems, under which He is represented to us in Scripture? What, for instance, is more rabid than a she-bear, as she roams abroad in search of her stolen cubs? And yet He was likened to this by Hosea; *I will meet them as a bear that is deprived of her whelps.* (xiii. 8.) What more terrible

than a lion, as he roars in triumph over his prey? And yet this was Isaiah's comparison; *Like as the lion roaring on his prey.* (xxxi. 4.) What more awful than the fire, as it bursts in torrents from Mount Etna? And yet He was likened to this by Nahum; *His fury is poured out like fire.* (i. 6.) What more tremendous than the hurricane, as it advances in its strength, threatening universal destruction? And yet He was likened to this by Jeremiah; *Behold, the whirlwind of the Lord goeth forth with fury, a continuing whirlwind.* (xxx. 23.) How then can GOD, having chosen such deadly images to represent Himself, be so averse to punishing? Why, let me tell you, these identical images rather confirm the truth that He is averse to punishing. Only have a little more patience, and listen.

We will suppose that you have two enemies: which of the two should you regard, as being the most bent upon doing you a mischief—the one, who, with a smile on his face, honey on his lips, and every expression of kindness, plots secretly against your life, and who, like Cain, invites you to join him in a pleasant walk—"Come, let us go abroad," (Gen. iv. 8, Vulg.)—or rather the other, who at once shows you his fierce countenance, and the weapons he has about him, who points to the very place where he intends striking you, and even threatens you from a distance with a terrifying noise and clatter in your ears? Surely, of these two enemies you would say, the first. S. Leo stated it as his opinion, that "there was more danger from a secret betrayer, than from an avowed enemy." The bravado of the latter always counts for less, either because you can prevent him, or because you can oppose him, or because you may be able in time to pacify him: but it is not so with your enemy in disguise. The malice he bears you so possesses him, that he cherishes it, like fire, when covered over with ashes, that it may better retain its vital heat. This being so, let GOD assume the most intimidating outward appearance; let Him ascend His chariot of the darkest clouds, depriving our world of the solar beams; let Him thunder over our heads, cast us into astonishment, and make the mountains quake; let Him take hold of His bow, and get ready His arrows; and let Him aggravate our

terrible dread to the utmost by the studied manifestation of the fulness of His wrath; let Him come forth with all His destroying legions of Angels about Him, summoned together at His nod; and, forming a ghastly retinue, let there be famine to bring up the rear, that it may waste the land; and poverty, that it may ruin families; and war, that it may unpeople cities; and pestilence, that it may sweep away whole provinces—what, after all and with all these imposing signs and circumstances, does God do? Can you tell me? David shall answer for you; *He gives a token to them that fear Him.* (Ps. lx. 6.) He gives us a warning in time, that we should find ourselves a shelter, that we should lift up our prayers, like a shield; that we should fortify and defend ourselves with the means of Grace, as with a breastplate. Thus S. Ambrose commented; "He frightens, that He may correct; He warns, that He may amend; He pre-vents, that He may pardon." Can then a doubt be left, as to His intention? It cannot be to take revenge; because he, who has set his mind upon this, will never threaten it. "The man, who wishes to strike," says S. Augustine, "never cries out, 'Beware.'"

Observe the conduct of those soldiers, who are resolved to avenge themselves of yonder position of the enemy, and to deliver it to the sword and flame. They proceed with all possible silence to prepare their ambush in some shady wood near its suburbs; they scoop out an approach underground; they lay down their secret mines, they choose the obscurity of night for the assault. Not satisfied with this precaution, they even cover over their weapons, lest the stars, which, as the Preacher said of them, "never faint in their watches" (xliii. 10) should, like faithful sentinels, spy them out and expose them. Certainly this is not the method God observes. He once designed to surprise the fort of Jericho and to destroy it. And yet how did He set about it? He orders the soldiers to march before the walls in broad day-light; the standards to be hoisted, the trumpets to be sounded, and the men, besides this, to make the air ring with their loud vociferations; *All the people will shout with a great shout.*[1] And

[1] See foot-note, Serm. xxxvii. s. 10.

why so, but because He would not attack any sinner unawares? S. Basil has instructed me that "There is something in the mercy, which GOD shows us, quite peculiar. He does not silently nor secretly overwhelm men with punishment; but He announces its approach beforehand, and by His timely threatenings calls sinners to repentance." Hence we infer that those threatenings, far from indicating any pleasure He takes in our punishment, are evidences of the pain it gives Him and of His sore reluctance.

8. And can you still retain your doubts? Why, after He has announced all these threatenings, don't you observe how He delays the time actually to inflict the blow? how He still demurs? how He waits and procrastinates? Go now, if you will have it so, and draw your own inference—Say from this, that He, who is so very slow to punish, must have a delight in punishing. Before we can build a splendid mansion, you know well, my hearers, that a length of time is generally indispensable. Much time is required for the design, much for the foundation, much for the superstructure, much for the roofing, much for the decorating, much for the perfect finish. But, should we wish to demolish the same mansion afterwards, we do it quickly; we make no long affair of it: in a very short time we lay it all in ruins. What would you gather from this fact? that GOD also acts in the same manner? "Quite the reverse of it," S. Chrysostom remarks: we build slowly, and destroy quickly: GOD builds quickly, and destroys slowly. "When He builds, He builds quickly; when He destroys, He destroys slowly."

Would you have a signal and convincing proof of this? I have one at your service. How many days, pray, did GOD take to complete this stupendous fabric, we call the world? A child could answer me: in six days. Well; but, when He would destroy, not a whole world, but one single city—a city by no means of first-rate size, or importance—it took Him seven whole days to accomplish it. Have you forgotten the city I just alluded to, Jericho? The LORD said to the captains of the army; "Advance, compass it about: for I promise that at the beginning of the seventh day I will destroy it: then *the walls of the city shall fall down flat.*" (Josh.

vi. 5.) What! on the seventh day! Where now, O LORD, is your mighty power? exclaims S. Chrysostom; what is become of your prowess, and outstretched arm? "You made the whole world in six days, and it takes you seven days to destroy one single city." Are you not He, the same GOD, who in the short compass of six days was able to form a world, of such immensity; was able to uprear those mountains, which in their huge loftiness seem to threaten the heaven; was able to depress those valleys, which seem to go down deep and penetrate into the entrails of the earth? Are not you He, who in so short a time have placed bounds to the ocean, let loose the waters, clothed the fields, peopled the forests, ennobled the firmament, embroidered the stars? If you spent but six short days in creating the entire world, whence comes it that, in destroying one city, you spend seven days? Let it not surprise you, my brethren: for by this very act GOD would convince you of the very truth I was laying down; "When He builds, He builds quickly; when He destroys, He destroys slowly." We take more time in building, than in destroying; GOD takes more time in destroying, than in building. And this work is one, which He only undertakes on compulsion. Hence He proceeds cautiously; hence He is slow in His progress; hence He consumes a far greater proportion of time, than such a mighty arm would seem to require. *Ah I will comfort Myself*, hear how He speaks by the mouth of Isaiah, *Ah I will comfort Myself over My adversaries, and I will be avenged of My enemies*, (i. 24, Vulg.;) as if He had said, "Must I then really engage in a work so very painful, as the destruction of My enemies? And why not allow them some further reprieve? Who knows whether in the interval they may not repent, lament their wickedness, and amend their ways?" How infinite then is the mercy of our GOD!

Is it not clear as noon-day that to appoint our punishment is something most abhorrent to His nature; that He is all pity, all kindness, all loveliness, and that hence the title He assumes to-day befits Him perfectly; *Behold, thy King cometh unto thee meek?* And now let me express a hope that none of you will refuse to hear the second part of my sermon;

for what I have hitherto stated will, I think, to many seem quite unedifying, if not mischievous: but allow me a moment's repose; and then we shall see the amount of practical instruction to be derived from a subject, which, as far as we have gone, has raised in your minds such an unfavourable impression.

The Second Part.

9. Well then, now we are all present, and anxious to hear the second part. What is the benefit we are to get to our souls by this evening's discourse? God is, in His own nature, most averse to punishing us. Therefore?—why, therefore we may go on sinning with greater impunity; therefore we may go on sinning with increased boldness. Your inference is utterly false. I infer the reverse of this; and, since you don't seem at all aware of it, I must inform you what my inference is—Therefore, I say, what a dreadful evil sin must be. Because—observe my argument well—because when a God, whom we have proved to be so unwilling to punish us—*a King meek*—can yet bring Himself for sins comparatively venial to deal out punishments so dreadful, so conspicuous, so oft repeated, as He most certainly does, then sin must needs be, of all the evils conceivable by the mind of man, the most intolerable.

10. And, in truth, to what demonstrations of punishment has God been led for faults, sometimes hardly viewed in that light at all? The Ark was once passing through the country of the Bethshemites. (1 Sam. vi.) Its glorious renown had been spread all over the country for the oracles it had uttered, and the victories it had procured. Hence the people were all in an excited state of curiosity to see it, even unveiled; a violation of that express law, which prohibited all laymen from looking on the Holy things of the sanctuary, when uncovered. (Numb. iv. 20.) Would you credit it? For so slight an offence, as this, seventy chief men fell down dead, together with fifty thousand of the common people. It was but a trivial fault in Nadab and Abihu, when, more from

inconsiderateness than presumption, they ventured to put strange fire into their censers; and yet for this they were terribly consumed by the flames. (Lev. x.) It was but a venial fault in Moses and Aaron, when, more from impatience than unbelief, they boldly demanded of the rocks the water, so little deserved by the people, (Numb. xx.;) and yet for this they were interdicted the promised land. Why should I mention the case of Uzzah, so notable a man among the Levites? Did not death suddenly arrest him for his having merely—it may be, with some irreverence—put forth his hand to prevent the Ark from falling to the ground? (2 Sam. vi.) David—with some feeling it must be allowed of ostentation, or of self-confidence—ordered Joab to number the people; and this was quite enough to cause their destruction before his eyes by a wide-spreading pestilence. (2 Sam. xxiv.) Hezekiah—we grant, with some feeling of self-complacency or of pride—made a display of his riches before the Babylonians, (2 Kings xx.;) and this sufficed to bring about, though not till after his death, their loss and wholesale plunder. Not only Scripture but Ecclesiastical history has so many examples to this effect, that to introduce further citation would be quite useless, unless from a wish to show off one's learning and research, not very great after all. I argue then, as follows. From whence does it arise that faults, even of such minor importance, are so severely punished by God? Does it arise from a natural sternness in His character, an inclination He has to be rigid, in exacting punishment? This surely cannot be; for we have already clearly proved the direct contrary. It therefore remains quite evident, that such conduct on His part must arise only from the intrinsic evil, the deep malignity, of our sins. Here then is the practical lesson to be derived, dear Sirs, from this evening's sermon. We must learn, for once at least in our lives, to estimate sin aright, and not look upon it, as a matter of sport and pleasantry, or as a fine thing, of which we may feel proud. For how stands the case? A God so gentle! *a King meek!* that He should be so carried beyond all bounds in His wrath, in His hatred of sin! He does not hesitate to dash all the most beautiful productions

of His own hands in pieces, to darken the Sun, to obscure the Moon, to deaden the stars: from the clouds He pours down a deluge of fire, reducing the entire universe to a heap of ashes; He lays waste the fields, He dries up the springs, He unpeoples the forests, He annihilates the mountains: the treasures of wealth He gives to the flames, the cities He sinks low in the earth, the nations He scatters abroad. He does not spare even His own consecrated dwellings. And do we make merry in a course of sin? And are we so besotted, as not only to treat it, as an amusement, but to make a brag and a boast of it?

11. S. Bonaventura shrewdly observes that no Prince carries his hostility so far, as ever to think of destroying his own territories, but only those of the enemy. Against these he directs his sword; thither he sends the desolating flame, and spends all his rage. "Kings and rulers lay waste the enemy's country to afflict them. But God, on the contrary, lays waste His own land." In His extreme detestation of those, who commit sin, He destroys on their account His own country, His own temple, His own Altar, His own habitations, His own Heavens. How tremendous then must be the evil and atrociousness of sin!

12. But Oh, the obliquity of our minds, that this should be the one thing, we find so difficult to believe! No wonder then that we will not submit ourselves; no, not even to a God, who thunders against us, not to mention His tender mercies. This was the very thing, which occasioned the indignant complaints of Salvian. "Oh, what intolerable pride! Numbers have to suffer the punishment due to their sins; none think fit to inquire into the causes of their sins." And how long, my hearers, shall we put off serious self-examination, and never consider how past all bearing we must needs be, when so infinitely good a God can bear with us no longer? *A King meek!* He cries aloud; we are deaf: He threatens; and we are unmoved: He scourges; and we are callous: and how must this end? Is then the day never to dawn, in which as vanquished we shall lay down at His feet the weapons of our rebellion, and yield to force what we have so obstinately refused and denied to love?

13. Never have I read in Holy Scripture the account given us of King Nebuchadnezzar without tracing in it an exact counterpart to this pride or stupidity of ours. Listen, I pray you, as I am now near an end, to this marvellous history. Daniel, the prophet, comes into the presence of that most haughty monarch, and in a commanding tone, such as his blameless life and his high character quite sanctioned, faithfully interprets his disastrous dream, giving him plainly to understand that, though the ruler of so many nations, he would shortly be driven from his throne a vagrant outcast; that his lot would be, as a brute beast, transformed into that very shape, to roam wild in the forests, and live a bestial life, until such time, as he should cast away the enormous pride of his heart, and, confessing that God reigned in the Heavens, should humble himself accordingly—*till thou know that the most High ruleth.* (Dan. iv. 22.) "Therefore," the prophet added, "therefore, O King, may my counsel be acceptable to thee; redeem thy sins with almsgiving, feed the hungry, clothe the naked; it may be that God will then have mercy upon thee." *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to thee; break off thy sins by righteousness and thine iniquities by showing mercy to the poor; perhaps He will forgive thine offences.* (iv. 24, Vulg.) Nebuchadnezzar could not but regard the words of Daniel, as being the words of God; for he had already seen clear proofs and evidences of his prophetic inspiration, and had actually honoured and worshipped him, as a god upon the earth. What must he do now, on receiving this frightful announcement? Surely he must have darted in haste from his throne, and prostrating himself low at Daniel's feet, must have placed at the disposal of this celestial interpreter all his richest treasures; if by any means he might buy off the signal chastisement, that hung over his head. If you suppose of him any such thing, you are in error. Theodoret states that the insolent wretch, not in the least intimidated, and much less brought to any sense of his sins, only went on living more wickedly than ever before. A full whole year was granted to him by God, as a space for repentance. But what then? "When he had so much time given him to repent in, he wasted it all in sin." Behold

him now stalking through the saloons of his palace, lost in admiration at its magnificence and at the plenitude of his power; when there fell *a voice from Heaven!* A voice struck him from Heaven, sounding aloud in his ears—"To the woods, to the woods!" *Thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field!* . . . Scarcely had the self-willed monarch heard these words, than he felt himself all of a sudden metamorphised in all his inner and outer man. He tore asunder the clothes from his body, and, while uttering a hoarse bellowing sound, discovered himself to be covered all over with a thick fleece; his skin hardened, his nails protruded, his hair became shaggy; and, taking at once to the earth on his four legs he fled, as a brute beast, from the society of man. And thus ejected from his palace by his own courtiers, he made his way direct to the woods; there he supported his miserable existence with the grass of the field and the water of the stagnant pool; and having no screen from the severity of the weather he suffered a constant exposure to every varying change, to the rain and hail, to the drought and cold. Daniel, you will remember, my hearers, had apprized the king that this should be his lot, until such time, as he would acknowledge a GOD above, more high than himself, *till thou know that the most High ruleth.* Some commentators, such as Cornelius and Maldonate have concluded from this circumstance, and I think wisely too, that all the natural feeling of a man was not totally extinguished in him; but that they still left him a free use of his reason, sufficient to have opened his eyes to the change he had undergone, to make him read therein the punishment of his sin, and to enable him to humble himself before GOD, as he afterwards did. But how long, do you think, was it that he delayed his repentance? A month? more: well, two months? more still. He delayed it seven years! Oh, what stubbornness! Oh, what self-will! Oh, what infatuation! Who among us would have supposed in man any such perverseness in refusing to come to terms with GOD? But this bad king, in real sober truth, must have been extremely demented, losing, as he had, so large a portion of his reason, and having acquired more the feelings of a brute than of a man. But in what terms are we poor sinners

to describe our own characters, we, who set up ourselves, as being so clear-headed, and who yet delay so long to awake to a sense of the evils, that threaten us, and to repent of our sins? Those judgments, which are now continually striking us direct from Heaven—what is their voice, their message other than this, that we should acknowledge a God above; *know that the most High ruleth?* This is the meaning of those desperate wars, that have well nigh drained the best blood out of all Europe.[1] The burdens, under whose pressure our cities are groaning, assure us of this; the sufferings, by which families are ruined, assure us of this; the falling-off of the population, which the earth, like one famished, has more than once absorbed, assures us of this; the renewed pestilences assure us of this; the relentless famines assure us of this; the wide-spreading mortality assures us of this: and yet who among us is conscious of being the least roused by all these severe judgments? Or who, by calmly contemplating the grievous nature of the punishment, infers from it the grievous nature of the sin we commit against God? Well may I say with Jeremiah; *I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright; no man repented of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?* (viii. 6.)

14. Yes, yes, *the most High ruleth!* He *ruleth,* ye most determined sinners; and, so long as you fight against this truth, do what you will, there is no help for you. Thou lecherous man, what is to become of thee? Wouldst thou know how long that debility of body is to last, which is slowly wearing out thy life in pain? *till thou know that the most High ruleth,* and till thou believe that there are far worse pains in store for thee, unless thou repent. Thou ambitious man, what is to become of thee? Wouldst thou know how long those malicious tongues are to obtain credit, which have so seriously damaged thy character? *till thou know that the most High ruleth,* and till thou believe that He will distress thee still more, unless thou dost humble thyself before Him. Thou wretched money-maker, what is to become of thee? Wouldest thou know how long all thy schemes are to end in disappointment, all thy bargains and double deal-

[1] Refer to Serm. xv.

ings to prove failures and unsuccessful? I will inform thee; *till thou know that the most High ruleth,* and till thou art well convinced that it will fare with thee in thy business worse and worse, unless thou become more reverential towards God, more kind-hearted to thy poor brethren, more liberal in promoting the welfare of the Church.

What therefore have we all now, in conclusion, to do? Ah, Lord God, we have to humble our guilty souls in Thy sight: we have to confess our sins, to acknowledge Thy justice, and so to frame our lives and conversation for the future, that Thou mayest deal with us in Thy character of a gracious King, —*a King meek*—even as Thine own most loving and affectionate nature would incline Thee;—and not according to Thine anger, the accident produced in Thee by our sins and wickedness.

SERMON XXXV.

THE INCOMPARABLE PASSION OF CHRIST.

[GOOD FRIDAY.]

LAM. I. 12.

"ALL YE THAT PASS BY, BEHOLD AND SEE WHETHER THERE BE ANY SORROW LIKE UNTO MY SORROW."

1. BE glad and rejoice, ye sinners, on this great Day of mourning; for you have conquered. Sing your triumphant song, shout, exult, and glory; for what you designed is crowned with success. You have done all in your power by your obstinate sins and wickednesses to make away with the innocent SON of GOD, to murder Him in the most cruel and sanguinary manner. Well, it is done. He is *cut off*—such was the violence you used—He *is cut off from the land of the living.* (Isa. liii. 8.) See me just come, at the nick of time, from the heights of Calvary, the bearer of these good news! I give you to understand that, beyond all question, before an immense crowd of eye-witnesses, naked, deserted, insulted, He expired on the Cross after three hours of the most agonizing torment. Are you therefore now satisfied, ye bloodthirsty men? Are you now quite content? What more would you desire? Would you go yourselves to Calvary, there to satiate your eyes with so joyous a spectacle, there to banquet on the wounds you have made, though inflicted by other men's hands, there to observe, how His flesh is mangled in pieces because of your carnal lusts, and His head

grieved with the acute pain your pride gave Him, and His lips turned into bitterness by the venom of your malicious talk? Come then, come; for I will conduct you to yonder eminence to gratify your wish. *Come ye, and let us go up to the mount of the Lord.* (Isa. ii. 3.) And yet I am by no means sure that, when you have gained the ascent, you will be able to restrain your tears.

I remember having read that when Seleucus the king, an outcast from his dominions, was lying naked upon the shore, on which the stormy sea had cast him, his rebellious subjects hastened to the spot, all in the joy of their hearts, that they might feast on the spectacle before them. But no sooner did they behold him extended on the beach, quite alone, gasping for his life, no clothes, no food, no kind of comfort and support whatsoever about him, than, in spite of themselves, their courage failed them. So deep was the sympathy they felt, so entire the alteration in their minds, that they lifted him from the ground, and led him back to his palace, clearly proving by such conduct that men would never commit the cruel acts they do, could they only, before engaging in them, foresee their consequences. I believe that you would behave this morning precisely in the same manner towards your King, if by any possibility He could now need your assistance. But Alas! Alas! not only is He overpowered with excruciating pain in the mighty ocean of His Passion, but He is quite drowned and buried in it; so that with the exception of His dead corpse there is nothing left for you now to see. Whatever then be the excess of your cruelty, it cannot refuse Him one tear, at least, of kind commiseration. For would you believe it? His very executioners, the same men, who with their own hands had torn open His veins, mangled His body, disjointed His bones, even they coming down from the mount had grief and tender pity depicted on their countenances, like men at least confounded, if not converted. *They smote their breasts and returned.* (S. Luke xxiii. 48.) And is it then possible for any of you, who are strangers to their brutal dispositions, to remain unmoved? Do my eyes deceive me? Cannot I already perceive some kindly drops, assuring me, as they trickle down from our eyes, that

your groans and lamentations will soon follow? Let them, I beseech you, flow freely; for, if ever you had a just cause to mourn, you have it to-day. . . .

I should not however be so earnest in making this demand upon your pity, had His death been one of an ordinary character. But it was a death the most affecting, the most infamous, the most barbarous, that was ever suffered by mortal man. And will you refuse to deplore it? According to the number of gaping wounds in the Redeemer's body, are the voices we hear in them, by means of which, though dead, He still cries aloud; *Oh, all ye that pass by, behold and see whether there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow?* as though He exclaimed, "Wherefore do ye pass by, ye cruel people, and yet not condescend to give Me one friendly look? I pray you, stop. Gaze upon Me. If you can find in any other man sufferings at all comparable with Mine, then you have My permission to proceed and to pass by, without giving Me the tribute of a single tear—the utmost your love may spare Me, while you are bathing with floods of tears the cheeks of your treacherous paramours or the graves of your departed worldly friends. But, should you find My Passion to be indeed beyond all compare, how is it possible that you have not a tear reserved for My sake?" Christian brethren, this is the demand I have, in the Redeemer's name, to press upon you this day. Refrain your tears for a season, until we ascertain, whether the sufferings of any human being, who ever lived in the world, are capable of being compared with the sufferings of CHRIST, *whether there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.* Should we meet with any such, then I shall cheerfully consent to your showing CHRIST no sympathy; but, if we find none, then I cannot allow you to approach me, after the manner of David, when he expressed himself willing to shed tears, only in moderation—*Thou wilt give us for our drink tears in measure.* (Ps. lxxx. 6, Vulg.) No limited sorrow corresponds with such unlimited suffering. Let the death of sons—of only sons—be mourned *in measure,* of brides, however beloved, of friends, however dear. We have no other *measure,* if we would worthily bewail the death of a GOD crucified, than to bewail it without *measure.* But then, in order to

procure such rivers of waters, as shall suffice for this immeasurable weeping, where is the rod, with which to draw it from the hard flinty rock of the human heart, and so to renew the miracle of the wilderness? Oh, thou renowned wood of the Cross, thou for a certainty, shalt be our rod . . . Far more potent than the rod in the hands of Moses, thou without touching us art able from a distance to reach and to soften our hearts. Suffer me then, in behalf of us all, to invoke the presence of Him, who died upon thee, imploring His supplies of grace; *Give us water.* (Ex. xvii. 2.) And of what quality shall the water be? None other than the most bitter, that ever gushed from a bleeding heart. Let the Hebrews receive from that rod, which prefigured Thee, water of the sweetest taste, like honey—*He filled them with honey out of the rock.* (Ps. lxxxi. 17, Vulg.) The water I ask let it be like gall to our souls, ay, that gall, which to-day was offered to the lips of a God athirst. This day is none other for us, than a day of mourning, strictness, and bitter grief. *Every soul, every soul,* so was it typically declared of this day, *Every soul that is not afflicted on this day shall perish from among the people.* (Lev. xxiii. 29, Vulg.) God grant that, as an evidence of an affliction so justly demanded of us, we may all pour out our hearts before Him in true contrition! And for this grace I lowly and reverently call upon Him in those memorable words:

Quo fonte manavit nefas
Fluent perennes lachrymæ
Si virgâ pœnitentiæ
Cordis rigorem conteras.[1] *Amen.*

The First Part.

2. I am quite aware of the fact that others have also undergone in this world the most intense sufferings. But

[1] Part of the hymn at Lauds, 4th Sunday in Lent. See the Roman Breviary. An English version of the lines may be useful to some readers.

From the deep fount of sin and woe
Our tears shall spring, nor cease to flow;
If Thou true penitence impart,
Thy rod to bruise the stony heart. *Amen.*

what then? If in some cases they affected the body, they did not the soul; or, if they affected the soul, they did not the body. CHRIST equally suffered in both; so as thereby fully to entitle Himself to that peculiar appellation, *The man of sorrows.* (Isa. liii. 3.) For, when we consider His soul, Oh, the fears, and the faintings, and the anxieties, and the anguish, and the bereavements, and the groanings, and the agonies, which, like fierce bloodhounds, were turned loose to torment it! And, as to His body, not a single part of it was without the infliction of its own particular pain; according to that simple but terrible expression of the prophet, *He was bruised for our iniquities.* His eyes were battered by their fists, His cheeks discoloured by the palms of their hands, His jaws were dried up with thirst, His lips envenomed with gall. To pierce through His temples, they applied the sharpest thorns. His hands and His feet were perforated with pointed nails. His reins and arms were sawn through with the most galling bandages. His neck was excoriated by the ropes, which dragged Him such a distance along the road, as though He were a common brute beast. His shoulders sank under the heavy burden and pressure of the cross, upon which His body was tightly strained. His nerves and muscles were thrown into convulsive spasms; and no single part of Him from the head to the feet escaped the fury of these scourges, poured out, as a storm and tempest, upon His back, their effect being to transform His whole frame into one enormous wound. *We have seen Him and there is no sightliness.* (Isa. liii. 2, Vulg.)

You must not here suppose, that I attach so very great importance to this universality in sufferings. I know that others have endured pains not at all less multiplied or less acute. But then such pains were more tolerable to every other body, than they were to His; for all agree in opinion that His Body was of a nature the most refined, the most delicate, and therefore the most sensitive, of all the bodies ever allotted to mortal man in any age; and this was owing to some extraordinary perfection, with which its organization and temperature were kneaded and moulded together. What-

ever proceeds from the hands of GOD, as wrought by Him in a miraculous way, is, in each distinct species of it, of the utmost perfection. Consider the manna He gave the Israelites in the wilderness, how dainty it was! Consider the wine He supplied the guests of Cana with, how exquisite its quality! And, if we are to believe commentators, even that simple bread, which satisfied the hungry multitudes in the desert, was exceedingly grateful to the taste. Now, if GOD, in these far less operations of His power, done, too, as it were, on the spur of the moment, displayed such rare perfection, can we ever believe that He would not raise that perfection to a far higher degree, in its kind, when He formed that most Sacred Body, which was to be the clothing of the fairest, noblest, most transcendent soul He ever had to make in this world? It cannot be; it cannot be, exclaims the Angelical Doctor. We must rather say that a body, so prepared by a supernatural exercise of power, must have been perfect, far beyond any other, produced by mere natural causes. "For operations, which are miraculous, are more excellent than others."

Consider, therefore, in the case of our LORD, how every sense must have been alive to its proper function—the touch, how susceptible under the stroke of the lash! the taste, how exquisite in the perception of what is nauseous! the smell, how keen to everything that is offensive! Consider too, as a still stronger proof, another remark of great weight, made by certain celebrated writers of known wisdom and sanctity: they have observed that the body of CHRIST was expressly formed for the purpose of its having to suffer pain. With our bodies it is not so; for, although in our present state we are subject to an endless variety of sorrows, tribulations, and kinds of death, yet we were not originally framed for any such purpose: so far from it, it was in order to preserve us from these many evils, to which flesh is subject, that GOD ordained in the earthly Paradise, and adapted to us, as individuals, such and such qualities in food and climate, such salutary influences in the heavenly bodies and in the seasons of the year, as would serve to place us beyond the reach of suffering and of death. "For GOD created man to

be immortal." (Wisd. ii. 23.) Nor, after the most diligent researches in our power, can we find a single creature—I say not, merely in heaven above, but in the depths below, among the devils, among the damned—a single instance of any kind, which was brought by GOD into existence, as to its own nature and primary intention, for the mere purpose of having to suffer pain. The body of CHRIST forms the only exception, who was Incarnate, in order that He might die for us. *He came to give His life a ransom for many.* (S. Matt. xx. 28.) Yes, this was indeed a body so fashioned, that into it, as into a most capacious reservoir, a vast sea of sorrows, outrages, torments, might be poured, thereby to purge away all the sins of mankind; and therefore to it exclusively was imparted a greater aptitude for suffering, to be traced either to the purity of the blood, or to an exquisite delicacy in the humours, or to the outward contexture. Nor is the authority of inspired Scripture wanting to establish what I say. For whereas the Psalmist makes CHRIST declare, *Sacrifice and meat-offering Thou wouldest not, but Mine ears hast Thou opened,* (Ps. xl. 6,) to denote His willingness to submit to suffering—the Apostle makes Him declare, *Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared for Me,* (Heb. x. 5,) to denote the aptitude He had received for the purpose of suffering.

Tell me therefore, O thou most sensitive Human flesh of JESUS, what were Thy pangs, when that sea and irresistible torrent at once in all its fulness broke out upon Thee, so as not to leave in Thee one part or particle free from sores and stripes. A single thorn piercing the incautious foot causes not only our delicate young men and our gentle damsels to cry out for the smart, but drives the very lions maddened with anguish through the wild woods of Mauritania. What, then, my LORD, must Thou have suffered from a multitude[1]

[1] There are three curious traditions, mentioned in this Sermon in connection with our LORD'S sufferings: it is thought best to omit the two first in the translation and to place them together in a note. We are told that the thorns in His crown were 72 in number, that no less than 500 persons offered themselves to act as His executioners (s. 4,) and that the nails used were of the largest size and blunted, (s. 13.) The translator is unable to trace these his-

of such thorns, not penetrating the hard and callous foot, but the skull, but the forehead, but the brain, those susceptible parts, where the least injury proves fatal? What then must those nails have done, which shattered Thy most tender fibres? what those scourges, which laid bare to the view Thy very entrails? Grant that the sufferings of other men have sometimes been more protracted in their duration: what does this signify, so long as in not a single instance were they more tremendous in their intensity?

3. Tell me, however, Christian people, in what other man were they more protracted in their duration? None must suppose that CHRIST's Passion was limited to the short time only, when He was actually in the clutches of His executioners. Alas! His Passion then was rather reaching its close. It commenced with His life. For from the time of His conception in the womb the frightful scene of His future agonies was early disclosed to His apprehension, according as it is written, *My sorrow is always before Me,* (Ps. xxxviii. 17, Vulg.) not *before Me* after the vague and random manner of our anticipating the future, but distinctly and in all its detail. He clearly saw from the first how many lashes He must receive, how many blows, how many violent strains, how many rude thrusts; and from whom. He knew beforehand with how many thorns He would be most barbarously transfixed, with how many spittings defaced, with how many jests derided, with how many various kinds of oppressive tyranny bowed down to the ground; so that it was just the same for Him to contemplate all His martyrdom from a distance, as it would be to ourselves to see it quite near. Nay, the effect was rather heightened; because in our case, should we be imprisoned, or even under sentence for some heinous crime, there would still be a ray of hope left us, either that we might escape by flight, or settle the matter with a bribe. We might trust to the intervention of some nobleman in power to speak a word in our favour, as that ever famous butler spake in behalf of

torical notices to their origin; nor does he know whether any, or what degree of authority, is to be attached to them. They are simply curious, and can add nothing to the fulness and perfection of the Divine narrative set forth in Scripture.

Joseph; or, if these resources fail, we might reckon upon rendering the Judge more lenient by dint of our importunities, or the officials more tender-hearted by our promises. Whereas CHRIST knew perfectly well the things, that must inevitably come upon Him. *He knew all things that should come upon Him.* So S. John tells us, (xviii. 4.) What then must have been His anguish of soul at all times? For we remember the case of a person, who, when the sentence of death was announced to him, turned suddenly grey-headed; of another, who fainted away; of another, who fell down dead; of another, who in some manner equally terrifying has shown us what power a merely anticipated evil possesses in itself to cause us pain.

Under such circumstances, I do not wonder that CHRIST was never once seen to laugh, but that He could assert of Himself with perfect truth, *I go mourning all the day long,* (Ps. xxxviii. 6,) or, as we find it more fully in another place, *My life is waxen old with heaviness and My years with mourning.* (xxxi. 11.) Only just fancy the amount of satisfaction king Belshazzar would have derived during his whole life, who we know was stabbed to death on his royal bed, had he always from his early childhood seen naked before him the dagger destined to be one day sheathed in his bosom! Wretched Sisera, had he always seen present before him that nail, with which the temples of his head were to be pierced near the river Kishon! Wretched Abimelech, had he always seen present before him that massive stone, with which his brains were to be smashed under the tower of Thebez! But "such was My life," says the LORD CHRIST. *My sorrow is always before Me:* yes, *always, always.* Whether I watch, or whether I slumber, or whether I sit, or whether I walk, *always*—it makes no difference. My suffering is *always* before Me. Hence it was, that He so continually harped upon those dismal words: *Mine enemies are daily in hand to swallow Me up,* (Ps. lvi. 3;) *They came round about Me daily like water, and compassed Me together on every side,* (Ps. lxxxviii. 17;) *Mine enemies revile Me all the day long,* (cii. 8;) *They daily mistake My words,* (lvi. 5;) *I have been scourged all the day long,* (lxxiii. 14, Vulg.) But how is this? Did then the actual flagella-

tion of CHRIST endure throughout an entire day? Why, it did not even happen in the time of day; it was just before the morning dawn. *My chastisement hath been in the morning,* (ibid. Vulg.) What then did He mean by employing this mode of speech, but that He had suffered mentally, every day of His life, those same bitter pains, which He actually suffered in a collected whole, one after another, on this day? According to this view, numerous Fathers maintain that many of those fits of horror and exhaustion, those derelictions, those fiery struggles, which He endured in the garden, were by no means at the time a new thing to Him and unusual, but what He had frequently experienced; ay, experienced so intensely, that they would have always caused Him to sweat blood, but for that supreme power, He had in Himself, either to raise or suppress such emotions, and not allow them to become more painful, that so they might prove more lasting. And to live thus thirty-three years in the constant anticipation of martyrdom and death, does it not appear to you equivalent to a protracted martyrdom, to a dying continually?

I have said nothing yet about that intense mortification He must have felt, as foreseeing, for this space of thirty-three years, all the outrages committed against heaven, which must have so inflamed His zeal and indignation; or as foreknowing all the miseries entailed upon mankind, which must have so excited His compassion and sorrow. Noah was once selected from among the human race, that on a fragile beam he might brave an universal deluge, and stem that unbounded ocean, which was brimming no less with the tears of the shipwrecked, than with those mighty cataracts, let loose from above and those floods from the mighty barriers broken up from beneath. But Scripture assures us that GOD Himself with His own hand shut the door of the ark, in order that Noah, during his confinement, might be spared the still more piercing sorrow of witnessing the wide-spread mortality. *And the Lord shut him in,* (Gen. vii. 16,) "that," as S. Chrysostom observes on the passage, "his suffering might not be aggravated by so much misery." Our JESUS is the single instance of a man, before whose eyes every outlet and every avenue of the human soul was thrown wide open, in order

that He might gaze leisurely, before the time, upon the destruction of persons most dear to Him; so that tears, and blood, and death, and miseries worse even than death presented themselves to His view on every side. And if, on beholding the grave of a single Lazarus, He betrayed such vehement emotion, as not only to sigh and weep, but even, to the surprise of all present, *to groan in the spirit*, (S. John xi. 33,) what must He have done, when He pictured to His mind's eye the armies of His slaughtered martyrs, some with their throats cut, some hacked in pieces, some burnt to death; all of them murdered, in consequence of the love they bare Him? in picturing to Himself the austerities of so many hermits, the sorrows of so many afflicted souls, the sufferings of so many mendicants, the havoc caused to His faithful ones by heresy, the persecutions raised against His votaries by impiety; and, above all, in picturing to Himself the everlasting punishment, which millions of souls will have to suffer in hell—those souls, in behalf of whom, no less than for His own Elect, He came to hang upon the cross and to shed His blood? Well therefore may we pronounce His Passion to be incomparable. *There is no sorrow like His,* inasmuch as He has not only taken upon Himself the afflictions peculiar to Himself, but those, which are common to mankind: these in His wondrous love He felt not less keenly than He did His own. *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.* (Isa. liii. 4.)

4. But, not to dwell on this more mysterious part of the Passion He endured during His whole life, *in the days of His flesh,* (Heb. v. 7,) let us confine ourselves to what is more plain and obvious in His sufferings this day. Tell me, after all your researches, have you ever discovered any person, against whom so many classes of men, not less differing in their stations than agreeing in their wickedness, ever joined together in conspiracy? Here some one was persecuted by the Clergy, but he was defended by the laity; and then we find the reverse: here some one was persecuted by the laity, but he was defended by the Clergy. Against this man the people rose up in arms, but the Prince took his part. To another his fellow-countrymen offered violence, but strangers

protected him. Such indeed is, generally, either the contrariety of interests or the innate love of a quarrel among us, that no injured person can fail in getting a helper, for the simple reason that he has got an oppressor. Elijah, when persecuted by the unrelenting Ahab, had in his trouble a poor widow to welcome and maintain him. David, when plotted against by his own king, had a foreign king to shelter him. Jephthah, when banished by his own brethren, had a wretched set of vagrants, who clave to him. Jeremiah, when ill-treated by his own countrymen, had a kind-hearted Ethiopian, who assisted him. Susanna, when accused by the two aged slanderers, had a discreet young man, who defended her. And so we might instance in numberless cases. Only in regard to CHRIST a custom so universal was not observed; for against Him with one marvellous accord Jews conspired with Gentiles, Romans with barbarians, commonalty with Nobility, Priests with laics, Magistrates with soldiers, old with young, wise with simple, learned with ignorant. And this is the very thing He figuratively predicted of Himself, when He declared that dogs and oxen,—animals, we know, in all other respects so hostile to each other,—should yet agree to persecute Him. *Many dogs are come about Me. Many oxen are come about Me—fat bulls of Basan close Me in on every side.* (Ps. xxii. 12, 16.)

How sore then must have been His mortification, thus to perceive Himself so great an object of abhorrence, that His death was concerted unanimously by a people the most disunited! That one single individual in all the whole world should be found capable of hating Him was indeed something quite monstrous and inhuman. For who, even wishing to hate Him, could have had any cause to do so? *Let us stand together. Who is My adversary? Let him come near to Me.* (Isa. l. 8.) Perhaps the rulers?—But with what reverence did He invariably treat them, now inculcating the respect to be shown them, now approving of the payment of tribute, now exhorting the people to meekness, to the love of peace, of concord, and of all those social virtues, on which the public safety so much depends! Perhaps the priests?—But how was He wont to magnify their office! Perhaps the Pharisees?

—But how much He insisted upon obedience to their injunctions! Perhaps the publicans?—But was not the constant favour He showed them something so marked, as to endanger His own reputation? Neither could the people hate Him, because His daily occupation was to do them good, now by instructing the ignorant, now by relieving the perplexed, now by comforting the afflicted, now by healing the sick, now by feeding the destitute. And then, as to the higher classes, there was nothing in Him for their covetous men to hate, because He had no hankering after their money; nothing for their ambitious men to hate, because He had no wish for their high places; nothing for their literary men to hate, because He never obstructed their popularity. Was an adulteress taken into custody brought before Him, did He not instantly contrive to set her free? Did a penitent woman, once a sinner, fall prostrate at His feet, did He not instantly express His readiness to absolve her? In a word, had He not far more reason, than ever Job had, to make it His boast that He had always been feet to the lame, eyes to the blind, a guide to the wanderer, a feeder of the hungry, a father to the orphans, and life to the dead? For these reasons it must indeed have been a prodigy, if one single individual were discovered, capable of openly professing hatred against Him. *Let us stand together; who is My adversary? let him come near to Me.*

Conceive therefore what His sorrow was, when so many thousands of persons, of every rank, profession, and religion, were all combined in hostility against Him, when His enemies were multiplied beyond the hairs of His head—*They that hate Me without a cause are more than the hairs of My head.* (Ps. lxix. 4.) Oh, the outrageous astounding fact! It is usually a difficult matter to find an executioner, however well paid, who will undertake to put the worst of convicts to death. 'Tis a task so revolting, that all shrink back from it, especially when it is to be performed in daylight, in the common thoroughfare, before the assembled populace. And yet, when CHRIST was to be put to death, executioners were found in such abundance that, if we are to believe tradition on this subject, they were all in a heat of rivalry, in angry conten-

tion among themselves, who should get the office, who should bear away the honour of being His murderer. Some few years ago, you were all shocked to hear that the world contained a set of men so audacious, as publicly in a conspicuous part of London to behead Charles their king. And you had good reason. But the men on that occasion wore masks, and they so utterly despaired of being ever able to justify their criminal act, that they felt ashamed to undertake it. Not so the persons, who put CHRIST to death. They gloried in assuming the most brazen face they could. *They that hate Thee have lift up their head,* (Ps. lxxxiii. 2;) if we may not go further, and say, that on that occasion they really assumed a new form altogether, while by their every word, look, action, attitude, they seemed anxious one with another to disclaim every resemblance to men, and to appear devils. *Let us swallow Him up alive, like Hell.* (Prov. i. 12, Vulg.)

And don't you believe that among them there were many persons, who had once received from CHRIST the most distinguished favours? Some through Him had recovered the use of their disabled hands; and these they now employed in plucking His beard: some, their palsied feet; and of these they now availed themselves in kicking Him, as He passed: others mocked Him with the very same tongue, to which He had restored the power of speech. Here one, who owed Him his sight, scowled at Him to insult Him. Here one, who owed Him his very life, helped to drag Him to Calvary to crucify Him: and with a like measure of ingratitude passing our understanding every one used against CHRIST the faculties they had received from CHRIST. Holy men treat the subject thus in their contemplations, explaining in this way His own memorable complaint; *They rewarded Me evil for good—and hatred for My good will.* (Ps. xxxv. 12; cix. 4.) I must tell you plainly that I should strongly object to this opinion, however generally well received, did I not see one of His own most dear disciples acting the principal part in this most dismal tragedy. One of the most familiar friends He had—*My companion*—this was the man, of all others, to lay great *wait for Him.* (Ps. lv. 14; xli. 9.) Oh, my poor afflicted Redeemer!

5. This fact alone—is it not quite enough to entitle Him to our deepest commiseration? I am aware that a similar calamity has not seldom fallen to the lot of others. Cæsar was betrayed by Brutus, Sardanapalus by Arbaces, Candaules by Gyges; by men, that is, who were their most chosen favourites. But, let me first ask, which of those heroes ever bestowed such high dignities or distinguished favours upon his betrayer, as CHRIST bestowed upon Judas? From his low plebeian beggarly condition He had raised him to be one of those twelve Senators, by whose joint labours and counsels the most mighty Kingdom in the universe was to be erected and governed. For him He had designed a share in all the dignity and glory, vested in the Priesthood and in the services of the Sanctuary. To him He had committed a power and authority over the elements of Nature; had subjected sickness, had made death obedient. The domineering pride of Hell He had laid quivering at his command; and, to omit no one token of His esteem and confidence, He had committed to his special trust the small patrimony, that in His voluntary state of indigence He had retained. As though He were the commonest slave, He had stooped before him, had condescendingly washed, and affectionately kissed his feet. And, by a contrivance quite unheard of before, He had in His inexhaustible friendship for him made him a very member incorporate in His own Body, and Blood, and Divine nature. And, pray, which of those princes, ever raised his betrayer to such a lofty pinnacle of grandeur? Yet this is not all. None of them was ever betrayed, excepting from some weighty motive of advantage on the part of his betrayer. Brutus, it is true, betrayed Cæsar; but it was from his ambition to restore liberty to his country. Arbaces betrayed Sardanapalus; but it was from his wish to gain the empire of the Medes. Gyges betrayed Candaules; but it was from his design to usurp the rule over Lydia. Whereas Judas—what prompted him to betray CHRIST? What was his inducement? Stop your ears, Christians, that you may not hear what it was! For the sake of thirty pieces of silver the miscreant betrayed Him!—Yes, for thirty pieces of silver! *They appointed*

him thirty pieces of silver. (S. Matt. xxvi. 15, Vulg.) But I am wrong here. The traitor did not even require so much. Know you not how he put Him up at a public sale for anything He could fetch, fixing no particular price? *What will ye give me and I will deliver Him up to you?* And then the very first advance made, low as it was, quite satisfied him. Though a man so notoriously fond of money, yet he did not object, he did not stand haggling, demurring at the meanness of the offer, as he might well have done; but, by greedily closing with it, as for the advantage of his interest, he intimated his readiness to have yielded Him up at a still lower price, and that, unlike all the buyers we are accustomed to, he did not consider it so much his business to get money, as to give his neighbour a bargain. And was there ever in this world a sale effected in a more shameful manner? When and where do we find the seller easily contented, and not rather the buyer hard to be prevailed upon to bid? Does this happen in our markets in the exposure to sale of any common articles of consumption? We see what strife and contention about the price is going on continually. A farthing more or a farthing less, in the purchase of some wretched trifle, is made of great consequence. Let us *falsify the balances by deceit,* once said those cheats in the Book of Amos; let us *falsify the balances by deceit.* And why all this iniquitous trickery?—*that we may sell the refuse of the wheat.* (viii. 5, 6.) We see that, when people have anything to sell, they strive to make the most of it; and yet, strange to say, CHRIST is delivered up to the first offer of only thirty pieces of silver. Ah, it is but too clear that their motive for selling Him was their hatred!

6. Hatred did I say? Worse, by heavens, far worse; for this sale is quite unique in its kind. I can understand how through hatred Joseph was betrayed and sold by his brethren: but then under what different circumstances! See him yonder in the fields of Dothan. Yes, I recognize him there. Mark, how he is being dragged with those lengthened cords out of the bottom of his famous pit, that he may be handed over to the Ishmeelite merchants. See him already bound, like some miserable slave. See how unmoved by his

tears and imprecations they even now place him on the swiftest dromedaries: he disappears; with a rapid flight he departs for Egypt. Poor unhappy youth! What was thy mighty offence against thy hard-hearted brethren, that could ever make them treat thee so ill? And yet thou canst find some comfort in thy trouble. Thou art sold, it is true; but for what end? that thou mayest not have to die. *It is better that he be sold to the Ishmeelites,* (Gen. xxxvii. 27, Vulg.:) so thy Judas spake; but he was a loving Judas.—*It is better;* yes, *it is better.* All with thee turns out for the best. Instead of thy coat being dipped in thy own blood, they will contrive to have it dipped in the blood of some poor kid, who shall be killed, as thy substitute. Knowest thou, when thou wouldst have been miserable? If sold, that thou mightest have to die. But far from thee is a wrong so inhuman: therefore be of good cheer. For one alone, among the children of men, who shall be called "the Son of man," was such a wrong exclusively reserved. *The Son of man shall be betrayed, that He may be crucified!* (S. Matt. xxvi. 2, Vulg.) And is not this, my hearers, most strictly true? I find that all prisoners of war are after a battle immediately sold, in order not to subject them to death. And the Civil law informs me that the distinctive name of *servi* has been given them from a feeling of pity, *à servando:* because by selling them their lives were *preserved:* hence it might with great propriety be recorded of this Joseph that *he was sold to be a bond servant,* (Ps. cv. 17;) for he was sold with no other view, than the preservation of his life. Not so with CHRIST. He is the person, that has to be sold, in order that His buyers may drive Him, like a brute beast, to the house of slaughter. And are not our spirits stirred up within us, at such an outrage? Ah, Judas, Judas, sacrilegious traitor, now thou understandest not what it is to have sold a GOD for a like fiendish purpose; but, when thine eyes are opened to know the deed thou hast done, how wilt thou feel then? Into what profound depths of despair wilt thou plunge headlong —into what paroxysms of furiousness and anger! All the money thou hast ever scraped together—Oh, how gladly wouldst thou give every farthing of it, if only to procure the

services of some executioner so obliging, as to kill thee first before thy Master! But there is no such executioner for thee. O wretch, thou must be thine own hangman! Complain not of this; by a hand more worthy thou couldst not fall. To the halter, I say, to the halter! For a miscreant like thee there is no mercy. Let me sound in thine ears the unalterable sentence of that God, who spake by Amos, *Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Israel and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver.* (ii. 6.) What have you to say, brethren, concerning all these things? Does it not appear to you that our Blessed Jesus was, far beyond all other men treated most infamously? Oh, what disgrace! Oh, what indignity! Oh, what wickedness was heaped upon Him!

7. And yet, with all these facts before you, you must not think that the excessive shame, He suffered from such a betrayal, ended here. There was something in it, which, though not so generally considered, was, in my belief, still more painful and more harrowing to His feelings. What was this? It was, if I mistake not, the infamy, that would be reflected upon Him from the personal character of His betrayer. And was not this a favoured pupil, who had the privilege of His private and special instructions? What a scholar forsooth was to be expected! With the hard labour of three years, and after so many fine instructions, He could produce nothing better than a miser and an assassin! The unhappy personages I have just mentioned were most ignobly betrayed either by subjects, slaves, or friends, but not by disciples, and by disciples living with them habitually on terms of friendship and confidence. To suffer under such circumstances is detrimental in the highest degree. For then one cannot reckon with any confidence upon exciting the sympathy, which in other respects the sufferer by treason would obtain, especially from the lower classes, ever wont to judge of matters in a rough coarse way. That, which is the result in a disciple—even one the best instructed—of his own malice and ill-will, is ascribed to the fault of the master, as if he were incompetent to teach him better, or to the inculcation of false principles and suspected doctrines; and so lamentable

a miscarriage in a single individual is soon made to bring the whole school into discredit. Hence I am led to think that the infinite scandal, which this strange and most surprising conduct of Judas gave even to good men, was the thing, that wounded to the very quick the honour of CHRIST. Hence S. Hilary declares, that CHRIST acknowledged His sadness to have attained its height—*My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death* (S. Matt. xxvi. 38)—because of the prevarication, because of the treachery of Judas. At all events, it is quite clear that, on His beginning to mention it, He became extremely agitated; *He was troubled in spirit.* (S. John xiii. 21.) He vindicated, He cleared Himself; He entered His protest against it. *He protested* (Vulg.) and declared that He was perfectly free from all blame of having caused the now irreparable ruin of that wretched being. He *protested,* so Liranus explains it, "that He had done everything likely to reclaim His disciple." This, moreover, was the particular scandal, which more than any other, gave men such free licence to talk, as they liked, about JESUS. It was a triumph to His enemies; it discouraged His friends; it estranged His followers. For they argued that, if one of His own Apostles, His *companion,* a person so dear to Him, one, who was so thoroughly conversant with His most mighty miracles, His wisdom, and His sanctity, could yet estimate Him so meanly, what impression would persons, not enjoying these advantages, be likely to form of His character? How might they be expected to act? Oh, my hearers, force me not again to tell you this. Or, if you are determined I should again inform you how they acted, allow me, at least, some short repose, some interval to breathe in; for without this relief I shall sink and faint, under the horrors we have yet to encounter, before we reach the foot of Calvary.

THE SECOND PART.

8. Would you then a second time know what were the sentiments respecting CHRIST entertained by those, who were

not so well acquainted with Him, as Judas was, look at the most frightful ill-usage, which in certain public tribunals, called "Courts of Justice," crushed Him to the earth: and then from this vile mode of treatment infer the vile opinion they entertained of Him. And when was it usual for justice to apprehend any person of established good character, had in esteem of the people, renowned for excellency of conduct, unless some very strong suspicion of his guilt first prepared the way? Joseph was most unjustly cast into prison: he certainly was; but then his garment was found in the hand of the woman, who, on charging him with an attempt to commit adultery,. produced it; *She kept the garment for a proof of her fidelity.* (Gen. xxxix. 16, Vulg.) The scandal was spread abroad, the requisite informations were first laid, in order to proceed legally to the commitment of the criminal. But, when CHRIST was to be committed, what were the informations? what was the scandal? where was the probability of His guilt? So far from anything of the kind, His reputation for sanctity stood higher than ever before. Only two days ago, He had been publicly announced, as the Prophet from heaven, the Great Proclaimer of the Truth. Of their own accord the multitudes had gone forth to welcome Him with branches of olive, to salute Him with songs of rejoicing, to canonize Him with their superlative admiration of His virtues—*Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!* (S. John xii. 13, Vulg.) Why then, at this very zenith of popular applause, go and apprehend Him, as a thief; just as if such an undoubted character for excellency of life were an infallible ground for suspecting guilt? *Behold, the world is gone after Him.* (S. John xii. 19.) This it was, that decided them, after all, in apprehending Him—He had *the world* to follow Him.

9. Consider then what outrages they committed in their mode of apprehending Him. Had those officers who went to the garden on this business been employed, not against some merely suspected character, but against a person of confessedly the worst character, one already under sentence for his crimes, could they have treated Him worse? Surely their duty obliged them to nothing more than simply bring-

ing Him before the Judicial bench. Why then haul Him along the public road, as you would drag a beast to the slaughter? *He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.* (Isa. liii. 7.) Why all this savage barbarity in buffeting, in kicking, in goading, in beating Him, as He passes along? This was to exceed the duty of the policeman, and to usurp the office of the executioner. For could there be a more flagrant piece of injustice? For if the prosecution generally comes first, and the punishment after it, why is there to be an exception made here? Why is CHRIST to be punished, before He is prosecuted and put on His trial? Trial—what sort of a trial? Ah, too truly may I exclaim with Isaiah; *He looked for judgment, but behold oppression, for righteousness, but behold a cry.* (Isa. v. 7.) In His trial no other law was observed than public odium and popular rage. Here we shall find the judge and the jury, the accusers and the officers, the adversaries and the witnesses, to be all on one side: and whereas, in other trials, it is not the custom of the Court to receive any evidence, which is not stated in writing, with the name of the witness appended, and then openly confirmed with an oath, in this Court every uproarious cry is admitted as legal evidence, and full credit is given to a low, beggarly, contemptible, excited, perjured, sacrilegious mob, thereby disqualified by every law from making an attestation. *False witnesses rose up against Me.* (Ps. xxvii. 12.)

10. But perhaps the least they can do is to give CHRIST leave to defend His own cause, and to clear His own innocence. Just so. Certainly then He is questioned, what account He can give of His disciples and His doctrine; but, when He is ready to answer—let Him speak with the utmost submission, and with a notable brevity—one of the officers launches a furious blow on His face; *One of the officers that stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand.* (S. John xviii. 22.) Oh, what an insufferable perversion of all justice! If they won't hear Him, why question Him? And, if they question Him, why not wait for His answer? Justice, O ye Heavens, 'tis for Justice I call: for your King is now trodden down not only by the insolence of paltry officials, but of the

very vilest ruffians. I do not demand His liberation: no: this can no longer be expected: I simply demand that, since you are agreed upon His destruction, you will at least vouchsafe Him that attention, that is not refused to murderers, adulterers, or assassins. Was the right in their case to give a brief pertinent answer ever disputed in a Court of justice? *Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him and know what he doeth?* (S. John vii. 51.) Certainly it does not. Every defendant had always a right by law to take time to collect his thoughts and to procure counsel for his defence. And yet CHRIST is not allowed—I say not to speak, when He wished—He is not allowed even to answer, when asked to speak. What then can He do for Himself before such unjust judges? Must He be silent? Must He hold His peace? Though questioned a second time, must He refrain from answering, even *as a man, in whose mouth there are no reproofs.* (Ps. xxxviii. 14.) Well; let Him continue silent; but Alas! brethren, see now what a strait He is in. If He continues silent, He is mocked as a fool: His silence is attributed either to mental imbecility, or to downright obstinacy, or to a poor cowardly spirit, while by some it is accepted, as a tacit acknowledgment of the crimes laid to His charge. In what light then are we to regard a trial, wherein the defendant is not allowed to speak, and yet at the same time punished for being silent? Declare your minds freely, my hearers. Does your extensive acquaintance with history bring to your recollection the case of a single criminal, who ever was exposed to a prosecution so deadly, so despotic as this?

I have become acquainted, in the course of my reading, with the history of those mariners, who had Jonah aboard their ship, how they behaved towards him when they knew for a certainty, by casting lot, that he, and none but he, had caused that violent tempest, which well nigh involved them all in death and destruction. They did not refuse him a hearing, nor at once violently cast him into the sea. No, they were anxious to let him first plead his cause for himself, and for this purpose they constituted themselves a Court of inquiry: and, just as if the sea had been perfectly

calm at the time, they made him pass a formal, severe, and minute examination—who are you? where do you come from? where are you going to? what is your profession? *What is thine occupation? and whence comest thou? what is thy country? and of what people art thou?* (Jonah i. 8.) And when they, at last, must needs find him guilty of death, they did not proceed to pass sentence, till such time, as the unhappy man had with his own mouth confessed his grievous crime, and even said, *For my sake this tempest is upon you.* (i. 12.) So strange did it appear, even to a set of barbarians, as S. Chrysostom observes with singular acuteness, to omit, in the conviction of a criminated person, any of the forms of justice; this, too, at a season, when the heavens were thundering most tremendously against them, the billows raging, the sea foaming, the vessel in the utmost jeopardy, and all on the very point of going down and suffering shipwreck. "Nevertheless, these sailors, barbarians too as they were, observe the precise order, best followed in a judicial process; and they observe it in the very midst of their alarm, while the storm and the waves in mountains raged about them." What so great demerit then was found in my JESUS that He alone should be deemed unworthy of so much consideration; and that, although in His case no advantage was to be got by haste, nor any mischief suffered from delay, yet it should be determined to show Him no terms of reason, such as were allowed during the furious storm to a rebellious prophet; and that, while the privilege of answer was denied Him, His silence should be construed into an offence? Well might He plead, *Have I not dissembled? Have I not kept silence? Have I not been quiet? and indignation is come upon Me.* (Job iii. 26, Vulg.)

11. Nor have I yet mentioned the worst of the wrongs done Him—the formulary used in pronouncing His sentence. I am aware that many persons, although innocent, have been condemned to different punishments, whether to banishment, confiscation of property, the prison, the cross, or the cup of poison: nor did this arise from any pardonable error in the judgment, but from the most studied rancorous ill will. In this way Socrates and Aristides were unjustly

condemned by the Athenians, Camillus and Scipio by the Romans, Mariamne by Herod, Thrasea by Nero, Metius by Domitian, Boetius by Theodoric. But what then? If each of these persons was condemned, although innocent, yet was he not condemned, because he was innocent. Here is a bold barefaced piece of injustice! something unheard of, incredible, monstrous; reserved till now, in evidence of the despicable value, at which His life was held, when He became *a very scorn of men,* (Ps. xxii. 6,) even of those men, to whom He was indeed a Glory. For if there is an instinctive dread in men's minds to take away the life of any common animal, which is inoffensive, quiet, and tractable, and if they would gladly escape the odium of the cruelty or injustice they display in this respect, how comes it that we find a person with so mean an estimate of the life of CHRIST, as publicly to profess before crowds of people that, being unable to take it away from Him in justice, he would yet do so, according to certain forms of law? But hear the authoritative sentence of Pilate, which he gave without the least sense of shame, with a loud voice, and, which is still more astounding, in an easy sitting posture:—as the Evangelist informs us, *He sat down in the judgment-seat.* (S. John xix. 13.) *I have found no cause of death in Him.* (S. Luke xxiii. 22.) *No cause of death in Him!* Why then, for a certainty, CHRIST must be allowed to spend the remainder of His life in peace: He must of necessity be loosened from His bonds: He must, as a matter of course, return home. This would be the unavoidable conclusion from such premisses. But Oh, the insolence of a most brazen-faced Judge! This reverse of this was the conclusion he came to. No. Therefore let Him be handed over to the executioners; therefore let Him be dragged to Calvary; therefore let Him be hung on the cross! *And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.* (S. Luke xxiii. 24.) What escape then could He possibly find in a tribunal, where not the most spotless innocency alone, but even the clearest proof and demonstration of it, could avail Him nothing? My former complaint that He had no trustworthy advocate to defend Him was then quite uncalled for. For suppose the Hortensiuses and the Tullies from Rome, and the Isocrateses

and the Demostheneses from Greece, were to have been all specially retained in His defence, what could He have wished beyond this—the placing of His innocence above all suspicion? From no orator, however eminent, could more have been hoped for. But His innocency was already perfectly well known to the judge; *who knew that for envy they had delivered Him.* (S. Matt. xxvii. 18.) It was already granted, already proved; and more than once, proved repeatedly; *I find no fault in this man,* (S. Luke xxiii. 4;) *I have found no fault in this man,* (xxiii. 14;) *What evil hath He done?* (xxiii. 22.) And yet—a thing unexampled—this circumstance had no weight whatever in absolving Him from the penalty of death.

12. Indeed nothing tended so much to aggravate its cruelty. For listen to a remark no less true than excellent, that has been made on this subject. If CHRIST had been pronounced guilty, the punishment must have corresponded in its nature with the nature of His crime. The Law commanded, *According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be.* (Deut. xxv. 2.) He must be either stoned, as a Naboth, if convicted of blasphemy; or massacred, as a Joab, if convicted of murder; or beheaded, as a Sheba, if convicted of sedition: and so on. Nor could the punishment have been transmuted at the caprice of any man; the law so plainly demanding that for a definite crime a definite punishment should be inflicted. But because CHRIST was not pronounced guilty of any crime whatsoever, what followed? It followed, that without any limit or law to control them, they might punish Him, as they pleased; that they might assail Him, as they chose, with scourges and thorns, with contempt and derision, with the gall and the vinegar, the wormwood and the Cross, or with whatever still more cruel punishment they preferred; insomuch that any tormentor was at liberty to add to the number or to increase the severity and duration of His sufferings. And when have you heard of any other delinquent thus handed over to the executioners, to be dealt with according *to their will?* What crime is this, so utterly new, that a penalty so extraordinary is reserved for it? What laws, what countries, what times, what people, ever permitted such a thing? Save and excepting against CHRIST, never, if

I mistake not, was power exercised, so intolerant, so arbitrary, so unprincipled. *He delivered Jesus unto their will.* (S. Luke xxiii. 25.)

13. Perhaps however CHRIST fell into the hands of some more humane executioners, who would mitigate the rudeness of this sentence by their moderation in giving it effect. I leave you to decide this point. These officers, certainly, as far as they have the power, are accustomed to treat convicts rather with kind compassion, than otherwise. Generally, they implore them in a feeling manner to forgive them the deadly blow their office calls upon them to inflict; and there is no fear that they will of their own mind in the least aggravate the punishment of the sufferer. They will rather sharpen the axe for greater despatch, and oil the noose that the pain they give may be lessened. But with what compassion did these ruffians proceed against CHRIST? Listen, ye believers, and be astounded. The Law did not suffer the blows inflicted on a criminal to exceed forty in number; *Forty stripes ye may give him and not exceed.* (Deut. xxv. 3.) Exceed this number but by one, and the criminal was henceforth looked upon, as degraded, disqualified ever afterwards, to receive any honour, incompetent to undertake any office. It was on this account that the Jews, whensoever in their wrath they beat Paul,—five such times at least we know of—took most particular care always to deduct one from the *forty*, rather than to exceed the number; for they wished to have it always in their power to win him back to Judaism by the tempting prospect of his elevation to some honourable office. And yet those stripes, which were inflicted upon CHRIST, not only exceeded *forty*, so as to degrade Him; but were numbered by many hundreds, so as to degrade Him to the very uttermost.

Moreover the judge had not in the least restricted them, as to the sort of scourge they were to use, nor as to the number of the hands to be employed, nor as to the length of time assigned to the punishment, but had left everything to their own discretion, *to their will.* Hence we shall have no difficulty in conceiving how furiously their passions were excited against Him, and what must have been the savage unrelenting liberty they now allowed themselves, causing the

Blessed body of our Redeemer such terrible sufferings. And to what race of men did these wretches belong? What rock more remote than Caucasus gave them birth? What tiger suckled them? How came it ever to pass that, when they saw a body so pure, so spotless, so delicate, exposed bare and naked before their eyes, the scourges did not instantly drop from their hands, and they themselves become motionless, powerless, senseless? Setting apart His Divine nature, regarding Him as a mere man, ought not that marvellous personal beauty, the like to which was never seen in the world, to have excited in them some natural sensations of pity? It is, however, a fact that their hearts were not in the least softened. But, just as no beauty in the flower, no loveliness in the fruit can prevent the clouds from pouring out their stormy hail-stones, now on the fields, now on the gardens, so the comeliness of JESUS, although Divine, was quite unable to stay the hands of these wicked men. And now, because His most Sacred head was in all His body the only part, which escaped the descending violence and torrent of their bloody stripes, against it they all now directed their united fury. And—Oh, think of their insolence!—without any one's suggesting to them the device, without any one's authorizing such an act, in total independence of the judge, they drove into His temple a huge crown of most penetrating sharp thorns, as though all the groves of His own beloved Palestine could offer Him no more worthy tribute of honour! Then blindfolding Him, as though He was some idiot of a king, they rudely compassed Him round about; one, to spit in His face; one, to buffet His cheeks; one, shamefully to pluck His beard. Again, whereas, with all their roughness of character, executioners still usually conceal from the sight of the malefactor the instruments of his approaching torment, Oh, how little did these torturers show CHRIST any such consideration! Don't you observe how they forced Him to bear on His shoulders the Cross He was to suffer on—to bear it, not as Isaac bare his wood, when it was scarce day-break, on a lonely path, through the desert forest, far from the witness of a single eye—but to bear it in open daylight, through the midst of Jerusalem,

with a flourish of trumpets before, with the beat of drums at His side, with a dense mass of people all about Him. Arriving thus at Calvary, they were not satisfied with uplifting CHRIST to that Cross, allowing Him at the same time to retain His clothes: no, no: with a view to His deeper degradation they will first strip Him from head to foot, at the certain risk of tearing open all His gory wounds, as they stick to the coarse garment. Then with a violent thrust they brought Him down flat upon His Cross: there they stretched and strained Him; there they nailed His feet, and nailed His hands; and after this—excuse me, if I hurry you so quickly through these details; for, were I to dwell on them, I fear, they would rive your hearts asunder—after this, raising one and all together a tremendous shout, so sudden and so loud, as to drive the frightened sun in an instant from the heavens, without further delay they hoisted up the King of Glory; and assailing Him all the time with their venom and mockery, they made a spectacle of Him before the vast assembled populace, now nailed to His Cross, now Crucified. And all this was done on a day of remarkable solemnity, in a place of peculiar infamy, on the height of a commanding eminence, and in a manner the most intolerable; for, whereas the Law required that in hanging malefactors on a cross simple cords should be used, they now used nails; nails too, as many writers affirm, of the largest size, and even blunted, so as to lacerate the flesh more keenly. O ye butchers, a race of men now extinct upon the earth! Be it done according to *your will*. Have your own way with Him. Banquet and revel upon your spotless your adorable victim!

But, besides all this, why wish Him to be crucified between two thieves? This was, for a certainty, no order of the judge: it was the executioners' own device; in the daring power they had assumed they treated Him just as they liked; *They have done unto Him whatsoever they listed.* (S. Matt. xvii. 12.) And what induced them to crucify Him between two thieves? I will tell you. They had observed, that throughout the whole long period of His sufferings CHRIST had complained but of one particular affront shown Him: it was this; that, when they went with weapons, spears, and halberds, to

apprehend Him in the garden, they were treating Him, as they would a thief; *Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and with staves for to take Me?* (S. Matt. xxvi. 55.) Ah, said they among themselves, is it so? To be treated as *a thief*—is this the insult, that most galls Him? As *a thief* then let us now treat Him; yes, by all means; just as *a thief*. And so they did. Not content with first choosing a thief of the lowest stamp in preference to Him, when they decided on the release of Barabbas, they contrived that thieves should keep Him company to Calvary, that thieves should hang on each side of His Cross. Such was the ardent desire these murderers had to wound Him in the most sensitive part. "Let us condemn Him with a most shameful death." (Wisd. ii. 20.) They would fain have Him universally regarded, by virtue of a death like this, as indeed a king—but a king of thieves. We all know that the Cross was in itself something most ignominious. Tully, and Seneca, and Livy, style it an unworthy, a disastrous, a despicable block of wood, while Augustine writes that "of all deaths this was the very worst." What then must the cross have been with the addition to it of these many public indignities? In a state of nudity, before the gaze of numberless spectators, on an elevated ground, in a conspicuous situation was He crucified: for these reasons I can understand how the sense of shame must have afflicted Him beyond anything else. Indeed can there be a doubt about it? "Shame," says S. Chrysostom, "is the heaviest of all punishments."

Hence I observed that the Apostle notices nothing else but this, when he declared that our LORD *having joy set before Him* (Vulg.)—but how little regarded!—*He endured the Cross despising the shame.* (Heb. xii. 2.) But how was this? Were there not many other sufferings for Him to *despise* on embracing His Cross? Certainly there were. He despised sorrows, He despised scourges, He despised nails, He despised derelictions, He despised anguish of soul, He despised agony of body. Yet these were not His chief victories: *to despise the shame* exceeded them all. And therefore, just as when we have a mind to praise any person, who at one time has overcome many adversaries, as David did, we are satisfied with

making mention of his one great achievement, with saying, "he overcame the giant," so we may say of CHRIST, that He died on the Cross *despising the shame*. He Himself declares His own sense that this was to be the most difficult trial, that awaited Him. *My shame is ever before Me.* (Ps. xliv. 16.) Often did He speak to His Eternal FATHER of this, as giving Him the utmost pain; *Know that for Thy sake I have suffered rebuke,* (Jer. xv. 15;) and elsewhere, *Shame hath covered My face,* (Ps. lxix. 7;) and elsewhere, *My confusion is daily before Me and the shame of My face hath covered Me.* (Ps. xliv. 16.) Hence we learn that none other than GOD Himself would be able thoroughly to understand the shame He had to suffer. *Thou hast known My reproof, My shame and My dishonour.* (Ps. lxix. 20.) Lastly, such was its nature, that Jeremiah scrupled not to speak out boldly concerning it, and to affirm that CHRIST would one day find in it the means of satiating His soul to the uttermost. *He is filled full with reproach.* (Lam. iii. 30.) It is not here said, that He would be *filled* with sorrows, or with wounds, or with stripes; so far from this, it is generally believed that CHRIST, although expiring in nothing short of a perfect deluge of blood, yet still thirsted for the increase of such like sufferings; *I thirst.* (S. John xix. 28.) He seemed to die well satiated with nothing, excepting His shame only. So great was its intensity. *He is filled with reproach.*

14. But there was another most bitter ingredient in the cup of my dear LORD'S incomparable Passion this day: one, which seems to crown all the incredible outrages and unheard-of insults He received. I allude to His finding no person to sympathize with Him. *I looked for some one to have pity on Me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort Me.* (Ps. lxix. 21.) Job on the dunghill had no lack of friends, who in pity for his sad forlorn estate tore the clothes from their own backs to cover him; and for seven days and seven nights bare him company, seated with him on the ground, keeping there a mournful watch with dust, in token of their deep affliction, scattered on their heads. . . . . But where is the single being, my Redeemer, who comes to show you any pity, to give you one word of comfort, to offer you

one token of regard? I fancy I can see you pale and exhausted, gazing with languid eyes all around you, and then addressing me in those words; *I looked and there was none to help!* Even from among your most favoured disciples, one betrayed you, another denied you, another forsook you. Your FATHER, as if disclaiming you, left you to the power of the tormentors: and, if your most disconsolate mother with a few other devout and attached women still followed you, Alas! what help could these poor creatures afford you, *women looking on afar off,* (S. Mark xv. 40,) surrounded too by the officials, who were assailing you, by the populace, who were mocking you, by the executioners, who were tormenting you, by the soldiers, who were insulting you, by the Priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, who with loud hisses were then blaspheming you. *They that passed by reviled Him wagging their heads.* (S. Matt. xxvii. 39.)

15. Yet what wonder that these bloody men show Him when alive, so little pity, who treated Him so badly, when dead? There is one among them, who rages against His poor lifeless corpse, even in the sight of His mother. And can we conceive any more shocking act of barbarity? Cato, on beholding the dead bodies of the Romans, against whom he had fought, wept. Titus, on beholding the dead bodies of the Jews, whom he had slain, wept. And Alexander, who, at last, after such infinite toil and trouble, had managed to get Darius out of the world, nevertheless, as he approached his pale motionless body, could not refrain from tears, and went so far, as to fold it up and conceal it with the mantle from his own shoulders, till it could obtain an honourable sepulture. And against the dear corpse of my Blessed LORD, all torn, and mangled, and one mass of wounds, as it is, they bring forth the spear with a desperate thrust to open His side and penetrate His heart. *One of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side.* (S. John xix. 34.) Oh, what a transport of rage was this! Oh, what a frantic atrocious deed! S. John Chrysostom here tells me that "to mock the dead is something far worse than even to crucify them." But I have no breath left in me to expatiate on such monstrous inhumanity.

Bewail it, thou, O sun, by withdrawing thy light; ye Hea-

vens, by pouring out your storms; ye tombs, by opening your jaws; ye rocks, by splitting asunder; ye mountains, by quaking; ye seas, by roaring; ye rivers, by suspending your course; ye most senseless creatures, by every possible demonstration you can make of your abhorrence and your dismay! Should you refuse to weep, I know not where else to find any other tears, as an offering this morning at the grave of my departed LORD. Shall I call upon these widows to weep? But they will tell me their tears are already bestowed on their husbands, to whose welfare they would sacrifice their all. Shall I call upon these young females They will tell me that their tears are already promised to their lovers, to whom they have plighted their best affections. These bereaved mothers will protest that the only graves, they can mourn over, are the graves of their lost children. It therefore becomes a duty to you, O ye rocks! to you, O ye caverns! to you, O ye stones!—it is your duty, I say, now to weep and bewail, unless the Funeral of CHRIST is to pass without a single mourner, unattended with any mark whatever of the most ordinary sympathy. But Alas! in no sense was His death, as compared with that of other men, of an ordinary kind. Clearly enough have I shown that in every point of view it is *unique*. It stands alone. There *is no sorrow like unto His*.

THE THIRD PART.

16. It is very far from my wish that the good to be derived from this heartrending account of the Divine Passion should consist of a few tears only, and terminate there. Such might be expected from the natural emotions of pity, awakened within us at the sight of an innocent person suffering wrongfully: nor is the Death of a crucified GOD to be deplored by us in the same way, as we should that of a slaughtered lamb. What I would rather wish to see in you is a deep feeling of contrition, a profound self-abasement, produced by some serious reflections on the vast ingratitude we have shown towards Him, who endured so much for our sakes. The Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans has a

very grand saying, attended, it is true, with much difficulty of explanation, but, as I shall now employ it, one greatly for your edification. He says that GOD had *set forth* before all men the Incarnate Word *to be a propitiation through faith in His blood for the remission of sins that are past.* (Rom. iii. 25.) That CHRIST came by means of His death to display at the same time both the Divine justice and mercy, I can well understand. He displayed that justice by the severity of the cost He paid to redeem a slave. He displayed that mercy by the excess of His love in offering Himself unto death to save a rebel. But why did the Apostle say, that CHRIST died *for the remission of sins that are past,* and not *of sins,* that are future? Was not His Sacrifice on the Cross a sufficient satisfaction for every sin of mankind, even were men to exceed all number, and this world to exceed all time? Beyond question, it was. Why then did not the Apostle here use more indefinite language, so as to comprise the future and the contingent, as well as the past and the actual? I know the answer to this, grounded on the literal reading of Pererius, which answer is considered the best. It is, that since, as we view matters, it is not possible in nature for any effect to precede its cause, it would pass man's understanding to say that sins committed before the time of CHRIST's coming had already been blotted out by virtue of His Blood not yet shed, and compensated by the value of a sum not yet paid down; and that for this reason the Apostle, being then anxious thoroughly to ground the Gentiles in the more obscure truths of the faith, only specified those sins, the remission of which was either not so well known, or not so apparent; and such were the sins, that preceded. But, besides this literal exposition, I would mention a moral and mystical one, countenanced by Salmeron, Sabout, and other first-rate commentators. With them I would maintain that S. Paul purposely used those terms, *for the remission of sins that are past,* and not *of sins* yet to come, that he might cut off at once every ground for believing that by any possibility sins for the future could be committed. And this arose from his excessive fervent love towards CHRIST, from his supreme veneration for His Passion, from his high estimate of His precious blood-shedding.

Hence, with all his sublimity of intellect, he could not comprehend how any person, having once seen what a blood was poured out and what a Passion endured on account of sin, could ever go and commit a sin afterwards. It will therefore, he thought within himself, be enough for my purpose, if I only mention sins preceding—*for the remission of sins that are past*—it is quite superfluous to talk about any sins for the future. "While he specifies past sins alone, he seems to intimate that the *status* of sin no longer existed."

17. And really, did we not know the contrary from experience, who would have thought that any could be found so unfeeling, so hard-hearted, so inhuman, as, while professing a faith that sin was the guilty cause of the Death of the LORD, should yet still cherish it in their hearts, welcome it under their roofs, and live on friendly terms with the murderer of One, who had redeemed them with His blood? This is such a piece of surpassing brutality that, were it not constantly before our eyes, we should set it down, as being not only impossible and monstrous, but fabulous, and quite beyond the capacity of man. But Alas! I shudder as I say it, not only are many many persons to be found, who take pleasure in offending GOD, but who sustain their lives by so doing, and from thence, more than from any other quarter, derive their income. On what, pray, are all your licentious comedians living, on what all your cheating pettifoggers, on what all your venal assassins, on what all your impudent strumpets, if not upon the daily wrongs, which Christians inflict on their LORD? *They eat the sins of My people.* (Hos. iv. 8, Vulg.) These sins make them a fine fortune, are their stock in trade, their capital; insomuch that, if there was no longer any wish among men to offend GOD, we should soon see every one of these persons made bankrupts. Go and perambulate the public streets, and there learn and tell me, whose Name is that, which we hear cursed at every step, if not the Name of GOD? Would people express some violent passion, they vent it in shameful abuses against GOD. Would they attest a known falsehood, they summon GOD to be their witness. Would they run riot in all sorts of dissipation and folly, GOD is made the butt of their lowest ribaldry: and hence it is come

to this, that now-a-days facetious remarks are voted to be tame, compliments insipid, jokes to be without any point, unless they have something in them that dishonours GOD. To use the words of Salvian; "Pleasantry now is not thought to be worth much, unless it contains something in it to offend GOD." And *Sangue di Christo!* the "Blood of CHRIST"—that price of Redemption—is it not used so commonly to express an oath, and so universally appealed to on every trifling occasion, as really to be the scum and offscouring of the whole city? It would almost seem that CHRIST had allowed it to flow so plenteously, that it might be converted by the ungodly into so much mire and dirt: and to this effect are the very words of Isaiah, *I will send Him to be trodden down, like the mire in the streets.* (x. 6, Vulg.)

18. Ah, my LORD, is it then for such ingrates, such heartless monsters, as these, that you suffer yourself to be crucified? Forgive me, if I am too bold. My zeal for your honour constrains me to speak. *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross; if Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* (S. Matt. xxvii. 40.) What have you to do yonder, O SON of GOD, upon that Cross? Do you pour out your blood with such extreme munificence, to make men value it the less? Where is the good of this? How are you advantaged by it? Ah *come down*—yes, yes—*come down from the Cross!* For what is the return you expect from men? Do you hope, because you have given your life for their sakes, they will therefore show you any regard whatsoever? Sadly are you mistaken. Every silly humour, every paltry interest, every absurd point of honour will take the precedence of you in their esteem; so that, if you were once sold for thirty pieces of silver, we have now Christians ready to betray you for thirty pence . . . And do you persist still in hanging on your cross for the sake of such people? Ah, *come down.* You are carrying your love too far. *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.* With justice might the Apostle say, *For a good man some would even dare to die,* (Rom. v. 7:) but how for men unthankful, for scoffers, for traitors how can this be?—And yet, after all, I am forgetting myself; I am forgetting the person I am speaking to. I am speaking

to a God, who thoroughly knows them, and yet can bear with them, who still suffers Himself to be so cruelly handled by His very despisers; who not only dies, that He may satisfy for the sins committed before His passion, *for the remission of sins that are past,* but—a far greater wonder—who dies for the sins to be committed after it. . . . .

19. . . Ye, who are still bent on returning to your former bad courses, notwithstanding all you have heard this morning, ye, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently—but Alas! to so little purpose—set forth crucified among you, listen patiently, I beseech you, to His mournful complaint; how He remonstrates with you for your ingratitude in the words of His beloved S. Bernard: "My people, why is it that you take more pleasure in serving him, who is both your enemy and mine, than you do in serving Me?" Come now, answer Me this . . . . What has the devil ever done for you, that can be compared with the benefits I have heaped upon you, the blessings of your creation and preservation? or, if these seem little in your eyes, or if your ingratitude soon loses sight of them, yet tell me this—Who is it, that has Redeemed you? Who has given His all for your sakes? "Of a certainty, it is not the devil, but I, who have Redeemed you." Well do I know how dear your souls have cost Me! all that I have wrought, all that I have endured, all that I have spent and exhausted of Myself for My great love towards you! Is this too but a small thing in your estimation? Well, let it go for nothing. Only has My enemy ever consented to do as much in your behalf? If he has, then are you welcome to forsake Me and to follow him instead. But, if his only study by night and by day has been to effect your ruin, whence, Oh whence, does it arise that you "take more pleasure in serving your enemy and Mine, than in serving Me?" If he be able, let him recount the journeys he has undertaken, in order to help you; let him enumerate the vigils he has observed, in order to instruct you; let him describe the toils and struggles he has endured, in order to comfort you; let him relate the reproaches he has suffered, in order to benefit you; let him show, moreover, the head transfixed, the limbs distorted, the hands pierced,

the side laid open for your sakes, as I now show you Mine. Ah, "not he, not he, but I Redeemed you." In one point alone I may have carried My love too far. Other people first inquire of a man, whether he wishes to be their servant; and then they redeem him from the hands, which intended his death. But I Redeemed you in the first instance; and then I asked you, whether you will serve Me. *Return unto Me: for I have Redeemed you.* (Isa. xliv. 22.) Christians, when you hear such a formidable reproof as this from the lips of your Redeemer, can you remain calm and unmoved? But this, after all, is the culminating point in His indefatigable and immeasurable love. All the offences you have heaped upon Him, whatsoever they be, whether past or whether present—He is most willing they should be pardoned. *Forgive them!* Such is the form of the amnesty; and it has no exception, no reserve.

20. A full and entire pardon for you all! Yes, dearest sinners, however flagrant the nature of your misdeeds, there is pardon for you, provided only you mourn over them. Ye gamblers, here is the pardon of all your daring blasphemies. Ye money-makers, here is the pardon of all your venal perjuries. Ye libertines, here is the pardon of all your licentious wantonness. Ye slanderers, ye duellists, ye homicides, be fully assured that every sin is graciously pardoned you. Pardoned, did I say? I made a mistake. This was not the proper expression. Who was the man to express himself correctly on this point? It was the great prophet Nathan. When he heard that the penitent David had with bitter tears made his confession, *I have sinned against the Lord,* (2 Sam. xii. 13,) he instantly said to him in reply, Be of good comfort; *the Lord also hath transferred thy sin.* The LORD hath *transferred* from thee thy enormous sin! One would have supposed the prophet would have said, He has remitted, He has blotted it out, or forgiven it. No; he spake more to the point. He has *transferred* it, has *taken it away.* For the sins of men have been *taken away* from their own shoulders; and for what purpose? that they might all be placed on the shoulders of CHRIST. *The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.* (Isa. liii. 6.) Wherefore, dear people, be glad

and joyful; for, though this is a Day for nothing else but weeping and wailing, yet the fact standeth sure. Thy sins are laid upon the shoulders of thy gracious SAVIOUR! . . . . And now let *the love of Christ constrain us henceforth not to live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us.* (2 Cor. v. 14.) What have I any more to do with a carnal self-pleasing life, and still less with a life devoted to my deadly enemy? For a Redeemed sinner, such as I, to live after my own evil lusts! for me to live, that I may please myself! Never let it be so! I would rather die. But, should my life be prolonged, may every part of it be consecrated to Him, who Died for me. In His service I wish to labour, to endure hardness, to spend every faculty I possess. *To Him my soul shall live.* (Ps. xxii. 30, Vulg.) And you, Christians, will you not in this join me? Why then delay doing so? Come now this very instant. In profound self-abasement let us all prostrate ourselves at the foot of His rugged couch of Death, there to pour out our souls before Him. Let us ask of Him mercy; let us ask of Him forgiveness: or stay; for, with your leave, I myself alone will be the substitute for you all in offering the supplication.

21. LORD of Eternal Majesty, behold us here in Thy presence before Thee, the guilty authors of Thy Death. We acknowledge it, we confess it. What further can we say unto Thee? To us belongeth the blame; yet to Thy own Divine love still more. This it was, which beyond every other cause nailed Thee to Thy doleful Cross. For, had Thy love permitted Thee to let us all descend into hell, as every end of justice demanded, neither the scourge, nor the cords, nor the nail, nor the shame would have fallen to Thy lot; but all Glory would have been to Thee! And did then the salvation of miserable men, a race of renegades and apostates, weigh with Thee so much, as to move Thee to redeem them at a price so exorbitant, at the price of Thy Blood? Oh, infinite love! Oh, incomparable generosity! If the Angels themselves were this morning for the first time to visit our world, ignorant both of Thee and of us men, Oh, the serious error they would fall into, in consequence of this very deed of Thine! They would conceive us to be Thy superiors in worth,

since it is for our sakes Thou didst die. Grant us, at least, this favour, beloved Lord, that we may heartily reciprocate Thy exceeding love. Let the wretch perish, who still refuses to love Thee! *If any love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema!* (1 Cor. xvi. 22.) Let him be cut off from all intercourse with humanity, driven far away to associate with savage beasts; let him depart hence and consume in the flames of hell! He, who is not this Day resolved to devote his life exclusively to Thy service, deserves no place among those, for whom Thou didst Die.

What, then, beloved, do we now wait for? Let the man, whose mind is not so resolved, resolve now without delay; and let the man, who is so resolved, renew and strengthen his resolution. And do Thou, O Lord, in the meanwhile, fit us for that blessing, which our hearts long for; a Blessing I implore, in behalf of all here present; a Blessing I offer to the acceptance of all, as a happy omen of their new religious life, to be dated from this very hour, in the Name of the Father, that He may invigorate us; of the Son, that He may enlighten us; of the Holy Spirit, that He may inflame us, warming our hearts with the fire of love.

SERMON XXXVI.

THE BODY'S SHARE IN THE GLORY OF THE RESURRECTION.

[EASTER SUNDAY.]

1 COR. XV. 53.

"THIS CORRUPTIBLE MUST PUT ON INCORRUPTION, AND THIS MORTAL MUST PUT ON IMMORTALITY."

1. AMONG the many religions, whether ancient or modern, which have flourished among men, you will not find one, save and except the Christian, which has not been remarkably complaisant to the body; all of them allowing it lawful pleasures, many of them conceding to it pleasures, which are to be blamed. Our religion alone has invariably shown itself so severe and unyielding towards it, as to suggest the possibility of its having been born to persecute the body. Christianity makes its appearance in the world, and unsheathing at once a deadly sharp-edged sword issues its proclamation; "War, War! This, ye people, is what I bring you. Let the man, who would take me for his friend, utter not in my hearing a word about a soft, easy, self-indulgent life. I at once explicitly declare, that this is not the object of my mission. *I came not to send peace, but a sword.*" (S. Matt. x. 34.) Then, setting forth its injunctions in particular, it requires those, who have married many wives, to abandon them all, and to be content with one. . . . It calls upon all men to mortify their carnal appetites, to endure hardness, to cut off the right

hand and to pluck out the right eye, to bring their bodies into strict and habitual subjection, to submit to any self-denial, however painful, rather than indulge in any of the sinful lusts of the flesh. It calls them to suffer, if need be, persecution, to give their bodies to be burned, to embrace the Cross, whatever its disgrace, its tortures, its horrors may prove. It bids them *Fear not them that kill the body.* (S. Matt. x. 28.)

What say you, my hearers, to these injunctions? Have you the courage to carry them into practice? Methinks, you are troubled in mind at this intelligence, and do not dare open your lips under some dreadful apprehension. But be of good cheer, Sirs; rally your spirits; for the balm quickly follows the wound to heal it, and in the same field the antidote is next neighbour to the poison. The same law, which orders us to show this body of ours no favour, but rather to keep it down, to fight against it, and, if need be, to nail it to a most painful Cross, in union with the Body of our LORD, that same law, I assure you, is the first to treat with us about its restoration; just as on this day the Body of CHRIST was restored to Him, no longer mangled, feeble, discoloured, perishable, afflicted, but, instead of all this, entire, robust, luminous, immortal, impassible. 'Tis true that, like some grain, rotting underground, the body will have to die; but it is in order to revive. 'Tis true that for a long time it will be lost; but it is in order to its recovery at the harvest, when it will be far more beautiful and more flourishing, than ever before. *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* It will therefore devolve on me this morning to show you, but at no great length,[1] how just and fair a thing it is, that, being called to so considerable a share of suffering in this world, it should likewise share in

[1] We must account for the marked disproportion, in regard to length, between this and the preceding sermon by the practice of the Church in administering the Holy Communion on Easter Sunday, but not on Good Friday. The vast number of Communicants on the former occasion rendered it expedient, if not necessary, to shorten the sermon; while, on the other hand, full scope was given on the latter day to the preacher to expatiate, as our Segneri so nobly does, on the great theme of a crucified SAVIOUR.

the reward in Paradise. Thus after the bodily mortification of Lent, and all you have undergone during the late most solemn season, you will be confirmed in the hope of a future Eternal Blessedness—a Blessedness to be enjoyed in the body, then to be glorified.

2. Pyrrhus, that most renowned commander in Epirus, was once saluted by his soldiers with the title of the Eagle, in allusion to the rapidity with which he pounced upon every enemy, fought and conquered him. On his hearing what they said, "'Tis true," he answered, "I am an eagle; but you, my soldiers, are the wings, on which I soar so high." The soul, if I do not mistake, may affirm that all the members of the body are precisely to it what the soldiers are to the General in command; namely, the wings, which, on behalf of the soul, are always in motion and activity, working for it. And, in truth, what one operation, however unimportant, can the soul now perform without the body? It cannot utter a word, it cannot advance a step, it cannot form an opinion. If, under affliction, it would express its sadness, it must borrow its tears and sighs from the body. If, in joy, it would have the delight of expressing its happiness, it is necessary that the body should help it with its laughter and gambols. In vain do the countless stars shine in the heavens, if the body refuse its eyes, wherewith the soul may admire them. From the body it derives pleasure in food; from the body delight in sweet sounds; from the body enjoyment of sweet odours. The gratification, afforded it by manly games, is from the body; that, which springs from gentle sleep, is from the body; and, to sum up all in the concise words of Tertullian, is there any natural advantage, any worldly profit, any sensible refreshment in the elements, which the soul does not enjoy through the medium of the body? Now only consider what immense love the soul must immediately conceive for the body when it comes to discover its vast debt of gratitude for such services. It fraternizes at once with it so dearly and tenderly, as to fear nothing in all the world so much as an injury done it, and to desire nothing in comparison of its well-being and prosperity. How exceedingly reluctant then would the soul be to impose upon the body

those severe hardships, which our religion either commands or recommends, unless it were to be somehow benefited by their means!

Take the case of a noble-hearted military chief. You will observe that he finds no pleasure in monopolizing all the fruits of the victory he has gained in the battle: no, Sirs; he desires to have the rewards impartially distributed among the men, who did the work; those sappers and miners, that attacking party, who scaled the heights, or entered the breach; those subaltern officers, who formed the ranks; those scouts, who guided the movements of the army, and even those common soldiers, who have quietly remained in the rear to protect the baggage. David, we know, acted, when he was the mere captain of a band, on this principle. He left the camp one morning with his six hundred men in pursuit of a company of the Amalekites, who had laid waste the country, where he had found an asylum, had plundered the stores and cattle, and carried off the women and children. On arriving at a brook in their way two hundred of these soldiers faint and exhausted with the fatigues of the march threw themselves on the bank, and refused to advance a step further. The remaining four hundred, passing the torrent in high spirits, surprised the enemy, emboldened and elated as he was by his recent success, fell upon him, defeated him, routed him, and departed with an immense booty. And now they immediately set about dividing the spoil among themselves, when David interfered—"Stop," he said, "I am quite willing you should have your share, and a fine share too; but where is the share belonging to those men, whom we left faint and exhausted down yonder at the brook?" "How!" they replied, "do you mean those cowardly fellows? What fatigue had they to undergo, except, while we were hard fighting, to recline at their ease under the shade of the trees, and to inhale the cool fresh breezes of the river?" "Never mind," David instantly rejoined, "it must be so. It is my will." And so a decree was from that day promulgated, since passed into an immutable law, that, whatever be the plunder, it should be equally divided between the men, who went on to the fight, and the men, who stayed in the rear

with the baggage. *As his part is that goeth down to the battle so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff.* (1 Sam. xxx. 24.)

Now the inference I draw is this. If it is fair and right that the man, who, while the fight was going on, did nothing more than protect the military stores, should nevertheless be rewarded for his pains—for, in a sense, he certainly contributed to the victory—is it not quite as just, that the man, who got wounded, who spilt his blood, who lost his limbs, who sacrificed his life, should be rewarded too? But these are the very parts of the body, which we expose in our mighty spiritual conflicts for truth, or for righteousness' sake. The wounds caused by the persecuting sword are inflicted on the body, not on the soul; from the body streams that Christian blood, that soaks the arena; to the body belong those limbs, that feed the wild beasts; to the body belongs that life, which the martyr dedicates to destruction: and would you then have the body alone go unrewarded? If the case be so, I feel it difficult to comprehend how the soul can have the face to exact so much of the body: then, too, the consequence would be, that we should have but very few Christians ready to defend our religion before the judgment seats, few to suffer for it in the dungeons, few to labour for its promotion at the continual sacrifice of their own ease and convenience. God therefore with signal justice has willed it that the body should conjointly with the soul have its reward in Eternity: so that, where there has been a common hand in the work, there should be no subsequent disunion in the reward. *This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* But why *must* it? For no other reason, if we would be decided by the opinion of Gregory of Nazianzum, than this: "Since the soul has closely allied itself to the flesh it ought, together with itself, to procure the entrance of the flesh into the glorious inheritance of Heaven, and let the flesh participate in its joys, as it once did in its sorrows."

3. This enables me to place the subject before you in a still clearer light. It is a well-known fact, my hearers, that, dependent, as we are, upon our senses we feel ourselves more moved by things sensible and material, than

by things spiritual and abstracted. Survey the bulk of mankind even of the better classes; you will find, as a general rule, that it is something quite beyond their comprehension how any person should ever take such delight in dry studies, as, for the sake of shutting himself up with some dead authors in a closet, willingly to renounce the ordinary pursuits and amusements of society, and to feel quite indifferent about what he has to eat, or to drink; and when people hear, by way of example, of a celebrated writer, such as Plutarch, himself telling us that, though famished with hunger, he could decline the substantial feast so sumptuously provided for him in Phæacia, in order to go and read about the fictitious banquet, so charmingly described by Homer, why, they only laugh at the story, and treat it as one of those fine speeches, which are easily made, because they are not so easily refuted. Such being the case, how could GOD have ever induced such numbers of persons, rude, uncivilized, coarse, and sensual to a degree, ever willingly, from a motive of love towards Him, to forego so many blessings appertaining to the body, as splendid wealth, endless comforts, and ever-varied delights, if all the remuneration He could promise them for it were certain kinds of reward, which, though highly sublime in themselves, were yet quite beyond the compass of their senses? Pardon me, O my LORD, if I am too presumptuous in pressing this point. I know quite well that the true bliss, which is to ravish the hearts of Thine elect in Heaven, will be the unclouded Vision of Thy face, and the distinct apprehension of Thy mysteries. May it only be Thy pleasure to grant me this calm and close contemplation of Thyself; and no other good beyond this shall I desire. My mind will be at once immersed in that huge ocean of a Greatness, that is Infinite: and so, being unable to find any shore whereat to land, nor any bottom whereon to rest, I shall love for ever to roam, swimming about in delight, and even wrecked in the fulness of all joy. Then shall I admire that ineffable Trinity of Persons in the Godhead, which forms a number, and does not multiply an Essence, I shall contemplate those different modes of relation, which

subsist without any subjection to dependence; those divers oppositions of terms, which are free from all danger of disagreement. I shall see a First, which of a Second is the beginning; and yet is not prior to it. I shall behold a Second, which originates from a First; and yet does not depend on it. I shall gaze upon a Third, which has its being from the First, in common with the Second; and yet is neither son to the First, nor brother to the Second. I shall understand how it is possible that such an everlasting fulness of paternity should exist in GOD, when He can beget but One only SON; and how such a perfection of utterance can be in Him, when yet He can express Himself but by One only Word: and, reasoning according to what I have read in the Scriptures concerning Him, I shall come to know how He repents, and yet does not change His will; how He afflicts Himself, and yet feels no pain; how He is angry, and yet is a stranger to conflict; how He departs, and yet stirs not from His place; how, without perceiving any pressure, He continually upholds all things, and does it with a finger: how without suffering from any weariness, He ever provides for all things, and by a single act; how He is communicative, but without loss to Himself; how He is free, but without mutability; intelligent, but without the formation of ideas; how He is present, but without locality; how He is from everlasting, but not subject to time; how He is ever new, but has no beginning. This, I confess, will be that supreme good, which will render me eternally happy, should I be accounted worthy of it.

But what is the idea of it, my hearers, that you have formed to yourselves? Why, I look round this congregation. There's a man fast asleep; there's another composing himself to sleep: and among these excellent good women there are yet some, on the point of finding fault with me and whispering to each other that I am soaring too high. Nor am I, mind, surprised at this; for I, who speak to you of such a happiness, do not myself understand it. I babble, as a child, stringing together a set of expressions, which, just as they are more admirable for their relative contrarieties, are therefore by reason of the profound mysteries they contain less within

the grasp of my comprehension. Suppose, then, that GOD had prepared for His servants no other sort of happiness than this, which is indeed the greatest, such as *eye hath not seen nor ear heard.* (1 Cor. ii. 9.) Alas, most people, I fear, would have said to Him, "We care nothing at all about it—*Our soul loatheth this light bread*" (Numb. xxi. 5)—and, as the Hebrews would have been reluctant to leave the quails and feathered fowls for the Manna; in other words, would have had no wish, for the sake of such a happiness so abstruse and incomprehensible, to leave the many good things, which are obvious and palpable. What, therefore, has GOD, in His most pitiful condescension to human frailty, done? He has adapted Himself to this kind of frailty in our propensities, and has been pleased to prepare for us blessings in heaven, which should not only resemble, as in a way of compensation, our present bodily ones, but be like them in quality; insomuch that these very hands, these ears, this nose, this palate, these eyes may each really have its own proper delights, wherewith to gratify their innate desires. *This corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality.* And this is what the blessed Lorenzo Giustiniani understood to be here intended, when he wrote that "The flesh, although spiritualized, will," nevertheless, "throughout all its senses thrill with a varied exuberance of joy."

4. See now what measures GOD has taken to render all those, who refuse to be saved, without excuse. For, tell me; when I exhort you in His name to mortify yourselves, to renounce, I mean, those pleasures of sense, in which you now so freely indulge, can you, as Christians, urge any reason to the contrary? Can you evade what I require? Can you refuse what I demand? I fully admit, it would be a very hard thing, were I to deny your ears the rich treat they are now enjoying from those lovely female voices, which resound in your theatres, your feasts, and your concerts, if you were never more to be favoured with a like entertainment. But, when I assure you that you will enjoy a like gratification, but in a far more exquisite and rapturous degree, and enjoy it, too, not for a few hours, but for an entire Eternity, the Heavenly songsters and choristers being in constant attend-

ance upon you, their harps always strung, always in tune—why do you mourn at the thought, I say not of losing, but only of deferring this pleasure? Yes, the very ears, which are now attent on what I say, will partake of this joy—no joy of a transient momentary nature, but solid, lasting, your joy for ever.[1] . . . . And, in regard to your other bodily senses, I might set before you a like cheering prospect, as a special reason for your now denying yourselves. And what can you urge against me in reply? Do I require more of you than this, that you should be happy to receive what you yourselves are now so anxious to obtain? Such is the true secret of persuading people, when we exhort them to do what they themselves have a mind to. So said the holy Bishop Eucherius, and he said it well: "The true method of persuasion is, when in our demands upon you we ask for that, which ye desire for yourselves." You would fain take your fill of corporeal satisfactions. Is it not so? Well, then, I wish you the same. Only with this difference: you are desiring such, as are polluted; I would give you such, as are pure: you are desiring such, as are defective; I would give you such, as are perfect: you are desiring such, as are evanescent; I would give you such, as are Eternal. "We avail ourselves of your love for things temporal to persuade you to love things Eternal." This is the full amount of the only

[1] Certain omissions made here will be considered necessary. When the preacher maintains that GOD will not only bestow upon the bodies of the saints in heaven blessings, equivalent to those they once enjoyed in the body on earth, but also such as shall be "similar in quality," (sect. 3,) and on this ground bids the lovers of theatrical representations, of sweet melodious sounds, of dainty viands, and even the admirers of female beauty deny themselves in such respects now, and expect a reward in the same kind hereafter, he is evidently treading on very questionable and dangerous ground. His main principle is correct, but it will not bear being carried into detail, and much less into an extreme consequence; lest "curious and carnal minds, lacking the Spirit of CHRIST," should pry into things kept secret from us, or figure to themselves an Epicurean heaven, in spite of the cautions introduced in this very section to prevent them. Accordingly, one of his ablest and most severe critics, Professor Finazzi has found great fault with the passage before us, (Memoria sulla eloquenza delle Prediche Quaresimali di P. Segneri. Pavia, 1831); and neither of his two staunch defenders against the strictures of the Professor—Pezzoli and Bevilacqua—have in this instance been able to refute the charge, which indeed they both pass by in silence. (Venezia, 1833. Lugano, 1845.)

difference between us. You would have the less: I offer you the greater. Pray, does such a proposal seem something beneath your notice?

5. It is true, that you must wait some little time, before you get the pleasures I promise you. *There is need of patience*, the Apostle has already told you, *that ye may receive the promise*. (Heb. x. 36.) But, when the outlay promises highly for one's advantage, who ever declines making it, although the remuneration may come somewhat later? Were you, by way of illustration, at the beginning of August, when the grapes are all diminutive in size and quite hard, to see some vine-dresser busy in the vintage that he might at once fill his cellars; to see him calling together the men to hasten on the whole process from the gathering to the wine press; what would you say to him? Would you commend this foolish precipitancy, this absurd greediness in the man? Stop! you would cry out to him, what are you doing? You are acting most unwisely in the management of your property. Is it not more for your interest to store your wine at a later period, when the juice will have acquired its proper flavour, strength, and soundness, and therefore be more likely to keep, than to store it now earlier in the year, when it is still rough, poor, and unseasoned, and therefore more likely to turn sour? The same remonstrance you would address to a gardener, who must needs be pulling his apples, before they are mellow; the same to a farmer, who must needs be putting the sickle to his corn, before it was ripe; the same to a sportsman, who must needs be beating the covers, before they were tenanted. And why may not I remonstrate with you in like manner, while you must needs, to your infinite loss, be anticipating in this present life those enjoyments, which you might so profitably reserve for a life to come? For surely, as Philo the Jew most sagaciously observed, "What are the delights of this present life, but so many thefts, we commit of the joys of a life to come?" If this be so, Christian friends, I must now beg you to answer me. Don't you think that, by reserving in this way its own rewards to the body also, in other words, by letting it share in the same glory, bestowed to-day upon the Body of CHRIST, GOD has rendered it without ex-

cuse, should it refuse to submit to the Spirit, to yield to right reason, and to mortify itself, that the same CHRIST may be honoured thereby? Nay, I go further: I affirm that GOD by acting in this way has cut off every excuse from all, who live under a cowardly dread, not merely of bodily mortification, but of death itself, and who do not even regard what the world calls the great final terror, as being the first true object of desire . . . .

THE SECOND PART.

6. It is then settled between us that the man must be wholly inexcusable, who, knowing he has one day to rise gloriously with the Redeemer to a far better life, still persists in his wretched fear of mortifying his body and of dying. The intrepid Cato, on his perceiving that the last breath of liberty was just quitting his Roman republic, made up his mind to be the first to die, in order to show the world that neither could Cato survive the downfal of liberty, nor liberty the downfal of Cato. Accordingly, with that hand of his, so perfectly pure from every stain of blood, he gave himself the deadly blow; and, though many persons hastened immediately to the spot to prevent him, yet they could only wrest the weapon from his grasp and bind up the wound, being quite unable to abate the ardour of his soul. For, soon after, when left alone, he rallied his little remaining strength, and as he was before exasperated against Cæsar, so now indignant at himself for not having straightway died under the first blow, he tore from the wound all the bandages, under the impulse of violent emotion; and then to his mighty spirit, which held everything in contempt, including itself, he not so much gave an exit, as an expulsion: "He did not breathe out, he thrust out his soul." This was certainly the rash deed of a man well nigh beside himself; nor do I mention it here to his praise, knowing, as I do, that the impiety of wishing to die, in opposition to nature, equals that of wishing, under the same circumstance, to prolong life. But, should you ask, what steeled the heart of Cato and steadied

his arm for this highly courageous achievement, how it was that he could so insolently dare challenge death, this arose, you must know, from his being engaged, at the time, in studying Phædo, that noble work of Plato, in which the philosopher proves the Immortality of the soul. "The iron blade gave him the power, Plato the will, to die." For firmly convinced that the soul did not die with the body, he deemed it a small matter to lose but a part of his existence, especially as, in the probable event of his imprisonment by Cæsar, he would soon have to resign that part to the executioner, or to keep it by the sufferance of his enemy. Now tell me. If Cato could so nerve himself by the force of such a conviction, what! had he believed, that he would not lose even that portion of himself; but that, consigning his body to the earth, more in deposit than as something lost, he would one day resume it, fashioned far more beautiful and more vigorous, than it was then? Must we not believe that his strength would have been vastly increased, when he was able to promise to his body also that Immortality, that Glory, that Happiness, which he before promised only to his soul? But this is the splendid promise we can promise ourselves; and so much the more, since on this day we behold our Jesus Risen from the dead. And shall we then fear—I will not say, to insult death by a challenge, when God denies it to us—but to embrace it, when He sends it? Oh, what unmanliness! Oh, what a timid paltry littleness of mind!

You have often, to my knowledge, derived immense pleasure from watching the eclipse of the sun. What then must be your surprise on hearing of the infinite discomposure this phenomenon causes to certain simple folks in Peru! So deep, so melancholy, so violent, so universal a wailing is immediately raised among their women on an eclipse, that one would suppose there was to be no more sun in the world. They rend their garments, they tear off their hair, they dig their nails into their cheeks. By way of quenching what they conceive to be a fiery wrath kindled in the heavens, they all cruelly lance their veins with sharp fish-bones, and deluge the ground with their blood. As for ourselves, we can afford to laugh at such a distress; and, let the eclipses come, even

of extraordinary character, we have no fear about us, we are in no trouble on that account. So far from it, to get a better view of them we lose no time in producing our shells filled with water, and in them, as in tiny lakes—the clearer, the less they are shaken—we trace at our leisure the reflections on the surface, the successive movements and variations, there faithfully delineated; nor do we feel the least hesitation in calling out to people near us to come and share in our excitement by admiring the deadly discolourment of the beauteous orb, and surveying its wan look and decline. And from whence do we derive all this excess of boldness? It is because our skill in astronomy, our knowledge of the movements of the heavenly bodies has taught us that the brilliancy of the planets will soon be restored to them, and that, though for a time hidden and obscured, they are not lost. Now we have, when we come to die, this very same knowledge, in regard to our bodies. And shall we then fear, as if we were no better than the heathen, who live without any hope of a life Eternal, and of a Resurrection bodily? Shall we *sorrow even as others, which have no hope?* (1 Thess. iv. 13.)

7. Oh, how utterly without a cause would be among us any such dastardly spirit! Why, we have seen this day that poor weak women and even tender children have felt quite ashamed to be at all frightened by the phenomena of death, however appalling. Either, like those lovely little dears Mametes and Vito, they have sung songs of triumph on the cross, or, like those spotless maidens, Apollonia and Lucia, they have danced in token of victory in the midst of the flames; not to speak of a S. Lawrence, who seated on his gridiron had the audacity to turn it into jest, and to offer some of his own roasted flesh, as a suitable dish, to his greedy persecutors. *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy!* (Micah vii. 8.) Hear how righteous men can flout at death with that pretty piece of mockery they learned from the prophet Micah; *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy!* Cease, O death, from thy proud domineering over me, as if thou hadst me down on the ground. *When I sit in darkness, I shall arise.* (Vulg.) After I have had to lie some brief space in the obscurity and darkness of a grave, *I shall arise, I shall*

arise. The Lord shall be a light unto me. Know I not, then, that my LORD is to be my reviving Sun? *I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against Him.* I will bear, as a sinner, His just indignation by now going to be dissolved into ashes. But how long? *Until He plead my cause:* until the Day of Judgment: no longer, no longer. And what follows? *He will bring me forth to the light, He will bring me forth to the light.* Oh, what a joy! what a festivity! what a triumph! *He will bring me forth to the light!* Then shall I come forth from the grave to enjoy the light, no more corruptible, but immortal. *And I shall behold His righteousness.* I shall see how exceeding righteous the LORD is, when He rewards even the bodies of all, who have undergone the least suffering out of love to His Name.

Who now does not admire the consummate wisdom, evinced in this ordinance of GOD, that not the soul alone should enjoy in Heaven its proper immortality and its proper felicity, but that the body, too, should be admitted to an equal share of the same? And does He not to-day with this view restore CHRIST His body, that so, by means of His triumphant resurrection, He might quicken the hopes we cherish of our own? Does He promise us such great things? Then there is not a single thing which our faith may not justly demand of us. Let this present poor body of ours suffer, let it be mortified, let it be emancipated, let it be tortured by the most savage death, we can conceive, still is it Blessed. We perfectly well understand it to be no act of cruelty, if we remove the seed we wish to sow from the comfortable granary, and expose it to the rain, wind, frost, heat, cold, and to all the severities of the open field; since that very same corn, which must decay, is the identical corn, which has again to spring up; nor could it again spring up, unless first it decay.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE DANGER, AFTER EASTER, OF A RELAPSE IN THE PENITENT.

[MONDAY IN EASTER WEEK.]

S. LUKE XXIV. 21.

"WE TRUSTED THAT IT HAD BEEN HE THAT SHOULD HAVE REDEEMED ISRAEL; AND BESIDE ALL THIS, TO-DAY IS THE THIRD DAY SINCE THESE THINGS WERE DONE."

1. WHOSOEVER loves, fears. Can any deny this truth? I go further, my hearers. Whosoever loves, fears to such a degree, that he fears too much: his heart flutters at every misgiving, however groundless; he is alarmed at every contingency, however trifling. "Love," says the poet, "is a thing full of anxious fear." For all this, I would not have you think scorn of me, on my candidly telling you that a certain fear has this morning sprung up in my mind. It is a fear, lest you should be induced, and perhaps before long, to abandon that holy course of living, which during this Sacred season you have so courageously undertaken. Don't, however, I beseech you, my brethren, be alarmed or offended at this; for such a fear arises not in me from any particular great danger I can perceive in your case, nor does it arise from any low estimate I may have formed of your religious principle, stability and good sense; it arises, if I may use such language, from the extreme love which I bear you.

Still, in real truth, the danger is not so trifling, nor is it so improbable, as not to justify me in taking some pains to avert it. For have you not heard in to-day's Gospel what happened to those two highly distinguished pilgrims on their way to Emmaus? It cannot be denied that at the beginning they acted the part of good believers, when they implicitly believed the words of CHRIST, and conceived the most confident hopes of His Resurrection; *We trusted that it had been He that should redeem Israel.* But now, when the evening of the third day is just about to cast its shadow, and as yet they see Him not, how do the poor creatures behave? They begin to waver, to distrust, and even to disbelieve; insomuch that CHRIST must needs reprimand them for incredulity and charge them with foolishness; *O fools and slow of heart to believe!* Thus any little trifle possesses a power sufficient to divert the mind from its better choice. Who then, my brethren, now promises me that before to-morrow evening, that is to say, before the evening of the third day, some of you may not also begin to change his mind, to set his affection on something else, and to swerve from his fidelity to CHRIST? Who promises me that he will not think of returning to his former practices? Who promises me that he will not think of falling back on his wonted amusements? Who promises me that he will not think of again embracing—Alas, who knows how soon?—his now detested habits of life? Hence I have resolved this morning to do this; to make, as though I had no trust whatever in your strength of character, that in this way I may confirm it. And therefore I crave the attentive hearing, due to one, who, bent exclusively on doing you good, has always in his sermons, as must be evident to yourselves, coveted no other praise, than what possibly may be awarded to him—the praise of having with a true heart consulted your welfare, and in all seriousness persuaded you of the things, that belong to your peace.

2. And first, let me say, I by no means assert that your new and more severe method of life will not be attended with some difficulty; that the pleasures of past days will not solicit you, that contending passions will not buffet you, and that you will not of necessity have to exert yourselves ear-

nestly, so as to persevere. But, tell me, for what length of time will such exertions be necessary? For many many years, will they not? for all the remainder of your life, until you come to die? Oh, good Heavens! And what then, my hearers, if that death, which you contemplate as being so very far off, thrown so obscurely into the distant background, should be even now at the door of your dwellings; and you, all this while, under a restless impatience for being obliged a few months longer to persevere in this wiser stricter mode of living, should come short of the crown, promised to those, who continue faithful unto the end?

I know not whether you have ever been led to observe what never occurs to me without forcing tears from my eyes, such is the pity it awakens in me. The distressed Israelites, with no little exercise of patience, and without any indications as yet, of a mutinous or ungodly disposition, had long stood waiting for the return of Moses from the Mount. At length wearied with his long delay they began to feel excessively annoyed, and, supposing him to have by this time totally forgotten them, and therefore not likely ever to return, or, at least, that he would keep them waiting for ever, they debated on the election of a new leader; and to secure one, who would prove more yielding to their wishes, they deemed it no disgrace to bow down before a finely gilded calf: *They changed their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay.* (Ps. cvi. 20.) And now in the delight of their hearts they had exchanged their modesty for wantonness, their gravity for mirth, their devotion for idolatry; when, all of a sudden, behold Moses! He returns, and bursting into a flame of unquenchable anger at the sight of their vile doings, he immediately breaks in pieces the Tables of the Law, reproves Aaron, smashes the image of the calf, and, having enlisted on his side the whole tribe of Levi, swift as lightning rushes into the ranks of the astounded and helpless multitude; then, dealing on every side of him wounds, blood, and destruction, he kills in a short time nearly twenty-three thousand persons with an indiscriminate slaughter, rendered more frightful in proportion to its suddenness and impetuosity. I now ask you, what length of time, think you, had

the people consumed, in patiently waiting for the return of their Moses? On the lowest computation, as the most learned Tostatus proves in his Commentary, thirty-five days; so that if they had only with the same patience waited five days longer,—the exact interval before his return—they would have been saved the guilt of such an abominable outrage, and spared the horrors of such a sanguinary massacre. And now, my hearers, does not their deplorable fate excite in you deep commiseration? Woe unto them indeed, for lack of a little more exercise of their patience, to have suffered so dreadfully! Oh, what an unspeakable misfortune! Oh, what a catastrophe without parallel! Now I clearly perceive the truth of the proverb, that the man, who suffers himself to be carried away at last by impatience, cannot but decide foolishly; *The impatient man shall work folly—He that is impatient exalteth folly.* (xiv. 17, 29, Vulg.) Was not this most conspicuously seen in the case before us?

But what now, if a similar misfortune should ever fall to your lot? You consider the hour of your death to be far distant, and therefore you get quite wearied: you begin saying within yourselves, What am I doing? Have I then for this long length of time to continue this same sort of life? Am I to pass so many years without ever gratifying my revenge? so many years without ever having my own way? For so many years am I never to allow my tongue the least liberty? Who can resist the temptation? Argue not, I beseech you, my dearest brethren, in this manner. It is far from unlikely that these many years you reckon on may turn out to be not even so many months, nor even so many weeks, nor even so many days. Peradventure, Death has already started on his way to descend the Mount. Already he draws near, brandishes his sword, makes his deadly aim, and even now takes your life. And can you lose heart for such a moment of time? "Woe unto them that have lost patience, and have forsaken the right ways, and have gone aside into crooked paths." (Ecclus. ii. 16, Vulg.) So the Preacher denounced all such unstable characters. Woe, woe unto them! How would it fare with you, ye Christians, were you to be ranked with this same wretched company, to involve yourselves in a

share of their malediction? Oh, the sighs, the deep groans you would utter through all eternity! Oh, sad thought, that, mingling your doleful lamentations with those of these impatient Israelites, you should, in hell, ever have to say; "For the mere consideration of five days—five short days, which we could not bring ourselves to tolerate—here we are! Our faintheartedness for so short a time—we must suffer the penalty of it for time without end!"

3. But come, grant that you have yet some years longer to live; ay, as many too, as youth still vigorous and a constitution still hale and hearty can promise you. This being granted, why does it seem a thing so very difficult to keep yourselves from sin? It arises from this: because you believe that you will have to feel the same conflicts always, which you feel at present. But this is not so. Every day you live your present difficulties will be gradually on the decrease; and, just as at the rising of the sun the mists retire, and at the blazing forth of heat the smoke vanishes, just so, as Divine Grace prevails in your soul, those difficulties, those anxieties, those disorderly affections, which now so sadly oppress it, will be taken away. Don't you all very well remember the case of Samson, when he had fallen so unhappily under the power of the Philistines? It was quite heart-rending to see so brave a man become the laughingstock of a vile rabble. Immured in a prison, laden with fetters, he had no power whatever to prevent his enemies from putting out his eyes. Thereupon, made to toil, like a brute beast, at the mill, he was surrounded with a number of half-witted children, sallow old men, brazen-faced women, all engaged in affronting him. Here one gives him a cut, as if he were idle; here one plays him a trick, as being blind: nor do any part company without first, by way of cruel sport, striking and paining him in one way or another. O Samson, Samson! where now is that thy valour, which made thee so terrible? thy power and might, which enabled thee to shatter the strong bands, as tow exposed to the fire, and to bear on thy neck the city-gates, as though they had been brass painted on canvass? Art not thou he, who once challenged the lions to wrestle, who, clenching them with thy bare arm,

didst throttle, and squeeze them to death, and then leave their carcases a prey to the bees? Art not thou he, who didst put to flight entire communities? Art not thou he, who didst lay waste whole districts? How is it, then, that every little puppy can now yelp at thee and turn thee into ridicule; and thou have no heart to put them to silence? Ah, but wait a little, my hearers, wait a little; and you shall soon see what Samson will be. You regard the unhappy man, as he is now, with his hair, wherein his strength lies, cut off. But this is not always to be his state. Very soon his locks will grow again, and be restored to him; and then will you see with what a strength before unknown he will shake in his embrace two mighty pillars, hurl houses to the ground, spread universal havoc about him, and make a more tremendous butchery of the panic-struck Philistines at his death, than ever he did in his life! And was not this the fact, my brethren? Suppose now the very same thing to happen to yourselves. At present your locks are cut short; in other words, the strengthening Grace of the Spirit in you is much impaired. What wonder then, if it seem, as though your senses were oppressing you, as their slave: if the devils with their filthy illusions were disquieting you; if temptations were continually causing you annoyance. But what then? Allow Grace some leisure time to gain ground; and then see. All the spiritual powers, given you first in Baptism, will come back to you. Faith will revive, Hope will flourish again; Charity will rekindle its flame; in a word, *the Spirit of God will come upon thee.* (1 Sam. x. 6.) Then you will feel within you such a stout, courageous heart, as not to be affrighted by death itself.

But, independent of this, who is so ignorant as not to know that all beginnings are somewhat more wearisome than their after-stages? It is more difficult at the first beginning for the ox to succumb to the yoke; more vexatious to the horse to suffer the bit; more awkward to the camel to stoop down to the burden. So the different arts and accomplishments, as music, sculpture, embroidery, and such like, all give the learner most trouble at the beginning. The man, who goes out to the war, is more easily frightened at the first onset; he, who

launches forth on the deep, more easily turns sick on his first voyage; he who travels by land, more easily gets fatigued on his first journey. If the same thing should occur in the Christian life, we must not think it strange. Hence Philo the Jew observed with singular acuteness that the first waters found in the wilderness were the bitter ones; the waters, after, were so sweet and so delicious, that from this quality in them in process of time they usurped to themselves the name of honey.[1] Therefore don't lay so great stress on those difficulties, which may seem to confront you, when you first enter upon GOD's service; for they are nothing more than primary difficulties, such as all must expect. To all it is at first a trying task to curb the flesh, to guard the tongue, to repress anger, to subdue pride; but only exercise a little patience, and all this will become so easy, so delightful to you, that, with wonder at your own selves, you will at times exclaim with S. Augustine: "Oh, how pleasant is suddenly become to me the privation of the pleasures of vanity." Oh, what joy! Oh, what peace! Oh, what satisfaction! Never could I have believed it so easy to renounce every forbidden gratification for the sake of GOD, and that "what caused me so much alarm, lest I should lose it, now in letting it go is become my joy." Grant it then perfectly true that you find at present a very great difficulty in not relapsing into your old bad habits. You ought not therefore to be discouraged; because, whether you die or live, this difficulty will only last a short time. "For a time, for a time"—they are words of one of high authority—"a patient man will bear for a time," and afterwards? "afterwards joy shall spring up to him." (Ecclus. i. 23.)

4. But don't you see that this very excuse of yours, whether it be true or a mere pretence, if worth anything, confirms against you the sentence of eternal condemnation? For listen now, and remember carefully what I say. If, according to your own confession, you find it now so very difficult not to fall back into sin, how much more difficult will you find it, when you are once fallen, to rise again! Will you not then be more weak, more languid, more prostrate?

[1] Refer to Serm. xxxv. s. 1.

Will not your evil habits be multiplied? Will not your corrupt inclinations have become more rampant? Thus your return to sin would be nothing less than ruining your soul. This, in my opinion, is so cogent an argument, as to be unanswerable. Still, to convince you more fully of its truth, it will be well for you to reflect that, in the event of your relapsing, your difficulty in effecting your recovery will be aggravated, not only because of your then enfeebled state, but from your relation to the devil, and also to GOD. Now, concerning the devil, I will set the matter quite clear before you by borrowing an illustration, as vivid as it is conclusive.

5. It will occasionally happen that a Christian nobleman falls into the hands of the Turk, is imprisoned at Algiers, and then kept under a confinement, not however very strict, and rather indulgent than otherwise. He therefore makes the most of a favourable opportunity, and, some fine day, finding his keepers more off their guard, or not so sharp, as they ought to be, what does our poor captive do? He breaks his chain, forces his way through the prison yards, and makes his escape towards the sea. Meeting there a galley just ready to sail he recovers his liberty. Thus far all goes well. But now, should he be so foolish as to suffer himself to be overtaken, and handed back once more to the clutches he had escaped of the exasperated barbarian, to what sort of dungeons, and to what sort of jailors, think you, he will now be consigned? The most horrible cell, that ever could disgrace the stone quarries of Africa, will be his portion. Irons upon his feet, irons upon his neck, irons upon his hands. If before he was permitted freely to breathe the open air, now he must not even see daylight. If before he was allowed frequently to take an out-door walk, now he must not even lie down. And, that the poor wretch may grow feebler in his body and so disabled from any second attempt at escape, he will every day, without a single reprieve, be tamed down by long abstinence from food, by cruel ill-treatment, and by quite a storm of bastinadoes. Just after this fashion, my hearers, will the devil not fail to treat you. He had you once, as his slaves, and, owing to some want of proper attention on his part, or because you have behaved yourself with

rather more pluck, you have happily got clear out of his hands. Is not this the fact? Well; what will he then do, if ever again you subject yourself to his power? I will tell you in the exact words of a Jeremiah; "He will *hedge you about* that you *cannot get out*, he will make your *chain heavy*." (Lam. iii. 7.) He will double your chains, he will tighten your bands; and, paying his particular attention to the spot, where you effected your escape, he will *hedge* you *about*. He will shut fast all the approaches, he will barricade every mode of access; nor will he allow you the least chink, through which to see the blessed light of the sun. If you were converted by the reading of pious books, he will take the greatest care, so that nothing but romances, novels, and such like literary trash shall ever come near you; if by hearing sermons, he will divert you from them by giving you a taste for active employment; if by religious conferences, he will detach you from them by the lure of worldly society; if by the still inward breathings of His Spirit, he will keep you in a perpetual din and clatter, with such a stir about your ears, as will almost quite stifle the voice of God. In a word, he will use his utmost malignity and all his cunning so as never to lose you again. "He will *hedge about* you that you *cannot get out*, he will make your *chain heavy*." Be therefore well on your guard, Christians: for, if ever again you place yourselves in his power, there you are. Proceed with caution, look carefully about you; for these are by no means dangers to be trifled with.

6. Thus far, as the devil is concerned in the matter. Then, in regard to God, is it not evident that, after your relapse, you will have less confidence that those assistances, He has hitherto granted you, will now enable you to recover your souls? For tell me: How can you expect He will any longer trust you, when you have so many times shamefully broken your word with Him? when, after all your past professions, vows, and promises, that you would never offend Him more, you invariably go and offend Him worse than ever? Is this behaving, like a man of honour? Judah, that he might keep the promise he made

Jacob to restore Benjamin to him from Egypt, offered to be himself detained in close confinement. Joshua, that he might keep the promise he made the Gibeonites to observe fidelity with them, as an ally, consented to draw upon himself a sharply contested battle. Regulus, though a heathen, that he might keep his famous promise of returning made to the Carthaginians, if no ransom should be agreed upon, did not hesitate to face a most excruciating death, when enclosed naked in a barrel, lined inside with frightful nails. And, in order that you may keep your word, which you have made to GOD, will you decline all suffering, refuse to curb one sensual desire, to restrain one angry passion? What sort of fidelity, of loyalty, of noble-hearted sincerity is this?

The great Prelate Augustine tells us that "the man is a mocker and no penitent, who still continues to do the things he repented of, and does not diminish his sins, but multiplies them." This is mocking GOD; this is to deceive and treat Him worse, than you would any low vulgar class of persons, to whom, nevertheless, you would fain not show yourself openly faithless. Besides this, consider that by returning to sin you launch out into an act of ingratitude the most extravagant, the most monstrous, that mortal man can stand guilty of; you despise the Grace, that was restored to you after your first wilful sin; and therefore you now stand on that very ground, which has already been condemned by the Apostle, as reprobate; because, having received the bounteous dews of heaven, *the rain that cometh oft upon it,* instead of yielding the kindly herb it *beareth thorns and briars,* and therefore deserves nothing but the fire; *whose end is to be burned.* (Heb. vi. 7, 8.) Add to this, that you are now giving occasion to a more grievous scandal; add to this, that you are now exhibiting a more degrading insolence; add to this, that you are now taking your place with those dogs returned to their vomit, of whom it is written that they are so disgusting to GOD; *the dog returned to his vomit again:* so we have it in S. Peter, (2 S. Pet. ii. 22;) *the dog that returneth to his vomit;* so we have it in the Proverbs, (xxvi. 11.) But who is called by this name? You must know perfectly well: *the fool who returns to his folly.* So

far therefore as God is concerned, do you think it possible, that you can begin to sin afresh without evident danger of perdition? Ah, were it so, never would the great Apostle have so decidedly ruled in the case of such sinners; *It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness than after they have known it to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* (2 S. Pet. ii. 21.)

7. But why go seeking so many reasons, when we have one at our disposal, which rightly understood will comprise every other? I must therefore call your particular attention to it; for, though it may possibly cause you no little alarm, this will be for your edification: and my object in these sermons is not so much to make myself agreeable, as to make myself useful. It is quite clear that all human affairs are ordered, in regard to God, as to their weight, their number, and their measure; so the author of the Book of Wisdom addressed Him; "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, in number, and in weight," (xi. 20;) insomuch that the Lord has not only predetermined with exactness how many souls He will have successively in the world, but also registers the number of their actions, their words, their movements, their thoughts; nor can this number by any risk be exceeded in even the most trivial matter or occurrence. It follows that God has in like manner settled beforehand what number of sins He will consent to suffer patiently from each one among us; and accordingly, when this number is run out, He is compelled, the very first sin we afterwards commit, either suddenly to snap the thread of our lives, or to deprive us of our senses, and so to abandon us to perdition. Hear S. Augustine, from whom I have thus far borrowed my argument. "We must needs think this, that we are preserved each of us through the patience of God, till such time, as we have not yet reached the limits and boundary of our sins; these being passed, He must strike us, and there is no more pardon."

Nor do the inspired Scriptures fail to give us some notable proofs to this effect, derived from what God declared, first of the Amorites, and then of the inhabitants of the five cities of the plain, and concerning the Pharisees. But not

to dwell on all these, I select one, as being the clearest. Often and often in the wilderness did the Israelites sin against God by their murmurings, by their despairings, by their complaints, by their idolatries at different times, and yet, while some were punished, an act of Grace was invariably extended to the rest, until they came in sight of their famous land of promise. Here they wilfully began sinning again, renewing their old grief against God, because He had carried them out of Egypt. It was then, that God highly exasperated said to Moses, "And up to what point am I to bear patiently the ill-usage of this people? I will destroy them all with one mighty pestilence. I will root them up, I will exterminate them, I will reduce them to nothing. *How long will this people provoke Me? I will smite them with the pestilence and consume them.*" (Numb. xiv. 11, 12, Vulg.) Notwithstanding all this, on the fervent intercession of Moses for their deliverance, God ultimately condescended to take this course with them. He would pardon all those, who were born subsequently to their departure from Egypt, or a little before that period; but, as to all the rest, who were adults at the time of that departure, He would show them no pity whatever. Can you now tell me, what was the reason, which induced God to make a distinction of this marked character? Hear what it was. Because these last had already provoked Him ten times. *They have tempted Me now these ten times.* (v. 22.) *Ten times* already; yes indeed, *ten times* they have provoked Me. Therefore they must all die. Really? Why then, so it was: God had kept such an exact account of the number of times that He had borne with them. Oh, that these poor souls, when at the point of reaching that ninth sin, their last terminus of pardon, had happily found some wise and faithful friend, knowing enough about the matter to cry out in time—"Stop! You have gone far enough: don't move a step in advance: for beyond this point all your hopes of obtaining pity will be in vain!" What an important service would this man have rendered them! But then who could ever have known it? The number in question is full of uncertainty; it varies: nor in all cases is the same rule observed; but one gets pardoned

more frequently, another less frequently. And so, if, in regard to the Hebrews, GOD had determined to bear with them up to the very tenth transgression, He yet applied a far stricter rule with the inhabitants of Damascus, and of Gaza, and of Tyre, and of Edom. Accordingly, hear in what terms He denounced them by His prophet Amos; *For three transgressions of Damascus and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof. For three transgressions of Gaza and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof. For three transgressions of Tyre and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof. For three transgressions of Edom and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof.* (i. 3, 6, 11.) This was as much as plainly informing them, that at the fourth transgression He would have to abandon them; and so the passage, as I understand it, is literally explained by Theodoret, Remigius, Aimon, Dionysius, Liranus, and others, who here followed the sense of that very best interpreter S. Jerome.

A doctrine so sound and consistent being thus established, draw nigh unto me, dear Christians, and tell me, how know you whether the sin, you have just recovered from, may not be that last sin, which GOD, in the hidden decrees of His predetermination, is to forgive you? Have you, peradventure, any certainty to the contrary? But why talk of certainty? Have you any conjecture, any glimmering notice of such a thing? So far from it, since GOD has tolerated you thus far, not only for ten times, as He did the Hebrews, but for twenty, but for thirty, it may be, for even a hundred, it is now far more likely you will be punished by Him, instead of being tolerated any longer. And, in spite of this, you are now contemplating a return to your sins! Alas! believe me, that I am most terribly afraid, when I consider the awful risk you are running. This sin, you now incline to, will perhaps be the very sin, for which no possible mercy whatever is reserved: not because—observe it well—not because it is beyond the power of a sinner, as long as he has life and free agency, to repent of any sin how enormous soever—this cannot be asserted in any sound divinity—but because, when he once has filled the measure of pardon apportioned to him, it follows that, on the very first sin he afterwards commits, he must be

instantly smitten; in other words, he must lose his life or his reason, or, if not so, he must be deprived for the future of those effectual aids of Grace, without which none can be saved. Why then a moment's more indecision? Sirs, this won't do. The nail must be clenched at once. *Strengthen thy stakes.* (Isa. liv. 2.) Does not GOD expressly say this in Isaiah? For truly this is no subject demanding a lengthened discussion; nor is our eternal Salvation to be hazarded for the sake of any transitory pleasure whatsoever, be it the pleasure of revenge, of self-interest, of passion, or of vanity. Come what will, you must now act with vigour; and, since by GOD's mercy you have been enabled happily to shake off the slavery of sin, you must decide upon never returning to it again, whatever sacrifice you may be called to. Let property go, let reputation go, let friends go, let life itself go, if need be; and let death be chosen, rather than sin. Die, rather than return to sin. How well does the Preacher bid us "Strive for thy soul;" and, if striving be not enough, Die for thy soul; "even unto Death fight for righteousness." (Ecclus. iv. 33, Vulg.)

8. Oh, how great was the joy conceived in Heaven, on your account, when strong in your resolution of returning during Lent to that LORD, whom you had wickedly forsaken, you left your home in good earnest for Church, there to join in her holy Ordinances, and more especially in the humble, lowly, penitent Confession of your sins and the earnest entreaty for their pardon. Oh, what a feast did the Angels then celebrate together for you! Oh, what rejoicings, what songs of jubilee and triumph were heard among the blessed spirits of the just! What fervent thanks were offered to GOD your FATHER, and to CHRIST your Redeemer! It is enough for you to know that one single soul of yours afforded, of itself, at that time more festive joy in Heaven, than did all the souls of the righteous taken collectively. And now, having furnished Heaven with such a feast of delight, are you already purposed to withdraw it; even as a person, who might to-day make you a splendid present, and to-morrow change his mind, and send to have it back! Oh, what rudeness! Oh, what impudence! And what else is it, as the Preacher retorts

upon you, than to make yourself an object of detestation? "To-day he lendeth and to-morrow will he ask it again: such a one is to be hated." (Ecclus. xx. 15.) I was on the point of saying that perhaps you had better have never flattered all those denizens of Heaven with any hope of their having recovered you to be their companion for ever, be you were thus minded so soon to mortify them, clothing their harps in mourning, converting their songs into tears, and the honour you did them into a still more serious affront. Fain would I, in such a case, raise my indignant voice against you in the words of Isaiah, *Woe to the rebellious children!* Have you broken your word to such an extent, that you *add sin to sin?* (xxx. 1.)

Think seriously of this. You have tried two masters; the devil, and CHRIST. You have for a season in different ways served now the one, now the other; so that you must be considered well acquainted with their respective characters. If therefore, after having renounced the devil and returned to your allegiance to CHRIST, you now renounce CHRIST and return to the devil, what does this imply? Will it not be a most undoubted manifesto on your part, that to your mind the devil's service seems the best; that you find it more agreeable to your taste, and more conducive to your interest. "The man, who has experienced both seems to have tested them with each other"—it is the weighty remark of Tertullian —"and passing his judgment he pronounces that preferable, to which he again attaches himself." And to a GOD of so great goodness can you show such an indignity? Oh, do not so, Christians; I entreat you by that Blood, He has shed for you, that precious Blood, which is the life of your souls. Rather die, rather die than do so. If you refuse me, I must renew my former cry; *Woe to the rebellious children!* What audacity is this to leave the service of GOD for that of the devil! Oh, what a dreadful wrong! And what can you ever gain by enslaving yourself to Hell, but its hatred? *What now hast thou to do in the way of Egypt to drink the troubled waters, and what hast thou to do with the way of the Assyrians to drink the waters of the river?* (Jer. ii. 18, Vulg.) Therefore be ye resolute, exclaims the Apostle; *Stand fast and*

be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage. (Gal. v. 1.) Take courage. Be valiant. The whole host of Heaven is eager to assist you, if you will be faithful. Doubt ye not but that with the Grace of GOD you will acquire a strength far above all you think. They, who have attained His rest, have many of them endured far more bitter conflicts than will probably fall to your lot: one was sawn asunder, one was stoned, one was burnt, one had his dwelling on the rocks, another pined to death in the caverns; not to mention other sore trials and hardships. And yet they could with ease do all this with GOD'S blessing upon them: why then, having the same blessing, will you not succeed in doing so much less, as it will be for you to abstain from mortal sin for the future? Resolve then that you will be able, and make your address to GOD, as Job did; I am resolved, LORD, to be Thine; Thine I am, Thine I will continue to be; *My righteousness which I have begun to hold I will not forsake.* (xxvii. 6, Vulg.) Only take me out of the world, if Thou dost foresee the day coming, in which I shall cease to be Thy servant.

THE SECOND PART.

9. I have no doubt whatever that you perfectly understand how highly necessary is it that we should not now relapse into sin. If fish have once extricated themselves from the hook, if stags have once disentangled themselves from the net, from that day forth do they not most carefully avoid the same danger a second time? Why should not we imitate their example, gifted, as we are, with such superior powers of intellect? All we want now is some guide to direct us to an easy method of doing what is required. Here he is: S. Chrysostom tells how; nor in my opinion could a more approved and suitable method be found. It is simply this: keep far aloof from the occasions of sin; not only from the greater, for to these you remember we devoted an entire sermon, but from the less, from the more inconsiderable; ay, even from such, as have the most remote tendency to dispose you to sin. For instance, if you have accustomed yourselves to loose sen-

sual pleasures, you should now abstain from such liberties, as are not positively indecent. If you have accustomed yourselves to a reckless way of talking, you should now abstain from such pleasantries, as are not considered violations of decorum. If you have accustomed yourself to intemperate feastings, you must now abstain from such dainties, as are not altogether forbidden: and so go on, applying the same rule to any other vices you have been attached to. Listen to the very words of the holy man. "This, above everything else, will tend to our security, when we not only avoid sins, but even things, which, being in themselves indifferent, or neutral, yet entrap us into sin. Do you wish to be chaste? Avoid even the amorous glance. Do you wish to shun obscene talk? Avoid even the idle laugh. Do you wish to be kept from drunkenness? Avoid luxuries and sumptuous tables, and totally abstain from wine."

10. But you will tell me that nothing should be demanded between friends but what is fair and reasonable; whereas to require of you all, that I have mentioned, would really be nothing short of condemning you to a mode of life not merely ascetic, but insupportable. You will say you deem it a great thing to keep clear of downright sin; but then to have to abstain besides from gratifications, which are not forbidden nor unclean, but indifferent, this seems carrying matters too far. Too far? Alas, what is it you say? Retract the word, for in speaking thus you show how little you understand the debt you now owe to GOD, and the obligation, which your state, as penitents, imposes upon you. What would you have said, had I, as some others do, exacted of you painful fastings, bloody flagellations, rugged haircloth, total silence, and long protracted vigils? Would you dare tell me this was carrying matters too far? Judge then whether I am going too far, when I wish you merely to deny yourselves some minor and, in a general view, lawful pleasures, on the ground of your having indulged in so many, that are absolutely gross and licentious, not to say quite disreputable?

Certainly King David was not of your way of thinking, when once oppressed with a raging thirst he longed for that most refreshing water of Bethlehem. Oh, the eagerness,

with which, on its being presented to him, he looked at it, seized it, and reached it to his mouth that he might quaff it at a single draught! But, after a moment's pause, he instantly changed his mind; and loath to taste one single drop he scattered it in the air, and made a sacrifice of it unto the LORD. *He would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord.* (2 Sam. xxiii. 16.) And why did he do this? Know you his reason? The prelate S. Gregory will inform you. The guilty pleasures he had many years ago taken with Bathsheba[1] at that moment occurred to his memory; hence, overwhelmed with the deepest sense of horror, he considered that to be thinking of lawful indulgences would be a mighty presumption in one, who had in times past so exceeded in such, as are criminal. "Because he remembered the unlawful things he had done, rigid against himself he would now even abstain from what was lawful." Does it then appear in your eyes so great a matter, when you call to mind how often you have dishonoured GOD by your loose pleasures, that now out of love to Him you should abridge yourself of certain things, which, though we grant them allowable, are by no means the safest for you, such as a ball, a rout, a comedy, a novel, a trifling conversation? Ah, no, my dear Sirs; never must we believe that the same amount of godly zeal suffices for a penitent sinner, as would have done, when he was an innocent man. Hence, in illustration of this fact we read in the Scriptures that the Israelites, after they had returned to Jerusalem from their sad captivity, became far more strict in their attendance on Divine worship, as Beda observed of them; and that the Maccabees too, after they rallied their courage from the effects of a shameful retreat, became far more in-

[1] There is an anachronism here (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4; 1 Chron. xi. 15—19,) David's sin of adultery was committed subsequently to his refusal of "the water of the well of Bethlehem." He had, however, at this time some other sins to oppress his conscience, though of a different character. See 1 Sam. xxi. 2, 3; xxii. 22; xxvii. 8—12; 2 Sam. iii. 3.

A like oversight occurs in Serm. xxxiv. s. 7, p. 184, where the "great shout," commanded to be made at the siege of Jericho, was not a previous warning from GOD of an impending destruction, yet to be averted by the repentance of the people, but an awful sign that the judgment was now on the point of being executed.

trepid in risking their lives, as Bachiarius noticed of them; not to cite other examples, too numerous to mention. Let me therefore hear no more of your carrying matters too far, when I ask you to keep aloof from some less occasions of sin, trivial, as they may be; because now, at this present time, a higher measure of perfection is expected of you.

11. But, independent of this, consider another answer I can give you, one which you little expect. I wish you to avoid these minor occasions, not that I may cause you greater mortification, but, the reverse—to secure your greater comfort: for it would be very much more difficult for you to yield a little to some wrong inclination, and to deny it much, than were you to deny it altogether. I will explain. S. Chrysostom raises a doubt, which may possess peculiar interest for some of my hearers, too ardent admirers of the fair sex. He inquires into the reason, why CHRIST, on confirming in His Evangelical Law the precepts, marked out in the Old, should have condemned in such strong language a lustful look. Was it not quite sufficient for His purpose to condemn all adulteries, rapes, and fornications? Why be so particularly anxious about looks, which in themselves can do no harm to any one? He answers, as we might expect from his Divine genius, and declares CHRIST to have ordered it in this way, that He might facilitate our progress to Heaven. For, once suppose a look to be regarded, as something lawful, according to your own wish in the matter, how far more difficult it would be, after that look, not to cherish the recollection of the lovely object, not to be enamoured of it, not to go mad after it, not to sink under those assaults, by which carnal nature will soon goad us on to the acts of fornication, rape, and adultery, than it would have been difficult in the first instance absolutely to abstain from that same looking. To avoid this look would be easy to any one by turning his eyes and face in an opposite direction, or by simply thinking of something else; but it is by no means so easy, after we have indulged in the look, to resist the assaults consequent on our so doing. This will demand a superhuman fortitude, a rare degree of virtue, such as not even the Saints can promise themselves. And therefore the golden-mouthed preacher

concludes, "CHRIST fixed the penalty on the man, who looks immodestly upon a woman, to spare us thereby a greater amount of trouble." It is much less difficult not to allow the fire to seize upon the stubble, than to extinguish it, when it has taken hold, spread its raging heat, and is all in a blaze and conflagration.

Let us return to our point. If you wish to keep clear from those excesses, into which your unbridled bad passions have in time past betrayed you, how must you act? Don't begin to tamper with them a little—do you understand? not a little, dear Christians; because, if you indulge them but in a little, believe me, you will soon be obliged to indulge them in much.

12. And why do some among you so loudly complain of the vast difficulty they have not to fall back, after being once recovered? I can fully believe it. If in your houses you keep about you the incentives to every lust, if wheresoever you turn your eyes you see nothing but indecent pictures and shameless mementoes of impurity, if you never dare deny your senses the least gratification, but, would you sleep, must needs recline on the softest couch; or, would you eat, must needs feast on the most delicious viands; or, would you drink, must needs relieve your thirst with the strongest Falernian; if you carry your luxurious taste even to assuming a feminine sort of dress; if you are for ever conversing with the notoriously irreligious and profligate; if your talk continually savours of licentiousness in the stories you tell, of a want of self-respect and self-control in the opinions and wishes you express; if your whole carriage and demeanour has a tendency to prepare you for what is evil—how can you ever expect to be able to resist temptation without the utmost pain? And what I have represented, by way of example, in the case of one sensual lust, you are to consider, as more or less happening in the case of other lusts, to which our nature is habituated. Are you over-hasty in demanding satisfaction at the risk of bloodshed? Prescribe to yourself a law that you will stifle the very first feeling of resentment. To take no notice at once of irritating language will, I allow, cost you some trouble; but this will be tolerable; whereas if,

because of it, you raise a quarrel, how hard you will find it afterwards to get quit of the affair. Are you perhaps too soon overheated at play? Bind yourself by an obligation never to approach a gaming table, even when invited. Instantly to refuse that loose companion of yours may perhaps seem rather awkward; but still, it is something bearable: whereas if, by complying, you get into that abandoned set, how difficult will you afterwards find it to cease from sin!

Nature has provided the birds with wings: just so: but for what end? To enable them to get out of the birdlime, when once caught? Not at all: but that they may keep clear of it altogether. To keep clear of it would cost them little; but to get out of it, Oh, what struggling would be necessary! Oh, what squeezing and fluttering! Nor would all this succeed. Precisely so, according to S. Chrysostom, it will happen to us. Wise counsels, prudent intentions, holy religious principles will assist us, as wings do the birds; not to raise our souls out of the traps, set by the devil in every place, but to prevent our ever falling into them. When we are once so fallen, it will cost us much to make such a bold energetic flight, as will ensure our liberty. "But how much soever we may resist, we are prisoners still." To the point then. Let this be that truly Divine lesson taught us this morning to prevent our relapse into sin. We must avoid the occasions of it, even when trivial. They are snares set in our way, and *He that is aware of the snares shall be secure.* (Prov. xi. 15, Vulg.) And when we have faithfully done our part, let us then trust the issue to the hands of GOD; for, although final perseverance is altogether by Grace, and a gift perfectly gratuitous, yet so good a LORD will not fail in His mercy and love, to bestow it upon us.

SERMON XXXVIII.

A SPIRITUAL LIFE NOT TO BE JUDGED FROM THE APPEARANCE.

[TUESDAY IN EASTER WEEK.]

S. LUKE XXIV. 36, 38, 39.

"PEACE BE UNTO YOU. . . . WHY ARE YE TROUBLED? IT IS I MYSELF."

1. YOU will rarely find any person more easily imposed upon than the man, who in forming his opinions is determined by appearances. That simple shepherd-boy, who has never with the help of astronomical instruments studied the dimensions, nor the distances, nor the order of the stars, when at night gazing on the firmament, views them in contrast with the moon; and at once with a fastidious or rather disdainful smile holds them all in contempt, as so many inferior lights, who have but to pay court to the more dignified luminary. And yet this notion is so false, that there is not a star in the heavens, however diminutive, which does not exceed the moon in size many hundred times. But, were you to tell him that those very same stars, which appear to him so small and twinkling, are yet all so much bigger than our earth, as to be capable of containing it, some of them twenty, some of them fifty, and some of them even a hundred and fifteen times, how hard he would find it to believe you. He would be of opinion, too, that some stars, which move with a most impetuous velocity, stand still; and that others, which oc-

cupy the most distant spheres, are near neighbours. And just in the same way shaping his opinion from appearances he will consider the colours, which he often admires in the rainbow, to be all of them real. He will believe that on fine clear days the heavens are actually painted over with blue: he will think that the air on hot summer evenings blushes red with real fire; and, if disposed to place a like trust in the representation made to him by the waters, he will swear that every oar in rowing twists under them, nor will he ever plough through them in the swift galley, but, looking to the shore, he will believe that the banks are flying and the groves retreating. So liable to err is the man, who judges only from the appearance, and belongs to a class of persons, of whom S. Augustine observed, that "their mode of seeing objects is their only key to understand them." But why go out of our way for an authority in proof of this? When the Apostles this morning saw CHRIST, the doors being shut, come into their upper-chamber, and show them wounds on His hands, wounds on His side, wounds on His feet, they were filled with such horror that they would gladly have taken their immediate flight, as from some hideous apparition, sent with tidings, not of peace and happiness, but of blood and destruction. *They were terrified and affrighted and supposed that they had seen a spirit.* (S. Luke xxiv. 37.) And yet when, soon after, on taking courage, they calmly and leisurely examined this same apparition, they perceived it to be so totally different from what they first imagined that they could hardly contain themselves for joy—*They wondered for joy,* (ver. 41, Vulg.) and they could never rest satisfied with admiring those very same wounds. They welcomed them now, as the most auspicious pledges of Salvation, whereas before they dreaded them, as the most dismal harbingers of misery.

Now conceive the illusion the bulk of Christians labour under to be one precisely of this nature. Minding to form their estimate of a spiritual life from outward appearances alone, they form so revolting and hateful an idea of it that with them to draw near to CHRIST is tantamount to throwing oneself into the embraces of death. They

believe that they will never for the time to come know what enjoyment, or gladness, or contentment mean; and therefore they hastily shun intercourse and communion with that God, who under an aspect of terror disguises blessed omens of peace. *Peace be unto you . . . why are ye troubled? . . . It is I.* Undeceive yourselves then, all ye, who are the victims of so serious an error; and, in order to this, attend to what I say, while in this my farewell sermon I shall convince you that a spiritual life is not, as it appears to you, formidable and painful, but rather joyous and pleasant.

2. Now in the first place I know perfectly well there are persons, who will never be made to comprehend how a spiritual man can be otherwise than miserable in the extreme; inasmuch as he is not only shut out from nearly all those recreations, which pass in the world for salutary and innocent, but is also subjected to many and even peculiar sufferings. A devout life, you say,—what sort of a life, pray, is it? Speaking seldom, often mourning, having to be nicknamed now by this person, now by that; suffering privations in your mode of living, infirmities in the body, attacks on your character, injuries in your property. And must not such a life as this be wretched in the extreme? Well said! Really you are preparing a most sturdy opposition against me at this early beginning of my discourse, and throwing out something like an impassable rock, which is to scare me back, as I sail out of harbour. But now just see how little I care for it, when I tell you that spiritual persons are not only habituated to these sufferings—which, by the way, you have so exaggerated beyond their due—but are themselves quite willing, when called to it, to suffer them. The Church's biographical history furnishes us with many instances of holy men, who of their own accord invited all these sufferings, and cheerfully went out to embrace them . . . . But if so, how can these make them miserable? No, by no means. Salvian, that eminent Prelate, will answer you: "A man is to be deemed unhappy by the view he takes of himself, and not by the opinions of other people; and therefore they, who are really blessed in the approval of their own consciences, cannot be made unhappy by the false judgment of any one." While

holy men so earnestly press forward in the path of what looks so vastly painful, purchasing at such a cost to themselves a piece of ground outwardly so uninviting, barren, and full of thorns, we must needs infer that they know of some vast treasure lying there, which we cannot see. But what can this ever be? It is the inward satisfaction, it is the inward comfort, it is the loving entertainment, by which GOD compensates them even here for all they suffer from time to time for His love's sake.

For what, my hearers, is your belief in this matter? that GOD evil intreats His servants in this life, as some say He does, because He would reward them afterwards in the life to come? Oh, how much are you deceived! The will of GOD, His design to reward us in another life, will, as S. Bernard remarked, certainly cause Him not to recompense us here with earthly things—with riches, with honour, with popularity, with the vanities of the world—but it will not prevent His giving us a foretaste of Heavenly Blessing, the source of true joy. Is not a handsome largess promised to soldiers after they have gained the victory? And yet we see that during the war an adequate pay is made them. Is not a liberal remuneration promised to country labourers, after they have got in the harvest? And yet we see that during reaping-time a decent maintenance is provided for them. "To working men of this world," the Saint observes, "food is usually given during the work, and wages at the end of it." Now only consider GOD, as acting towards us in this way. He reserves a rich reward for us in the life to come; but He does not, on this account, defraud us of a sufficient stipend, while we are here. GOD had promised the Israelites the possession of a land so blessed, as to overflow with milk, distil honey, and teem with all manner of riches; and, notwithstanding this, how sumptuously did He also cater for them first in the wilderness! It would seem that He might with all fairness have said to them: "Go now, manage to maintain yourselves, as well as you can. Let those bitter roots, let those wild grapes you will find by the way-side suffice you. Contrive to live for the present on any common herb: for, after this, the time will come, when you will revel

in the midst of the most exquisite fruits, the most luxurious animal food. You will then enjoy ever-fruitful vines, ever-golden corn, ever-ripened olives, ever-verdant pastures. You will be girded all around with forests abounding with the finest game, with waters peopled with the most savoury fish: therefore don't think it hard to be obliged to live now on such poor fare." God might have said this to them; and yet He said nothing of the kind. But He entertained them in the desert with a sumptuousness surpassing what others enjoy in their cities. *Thou, O Lord, sentest a gracious rain upon Thine inheritance.* (Ps. lxviii. 9.) He created for them a new species of food, unknown hitherto to the butteries of Egypt and to the kitchens of Pharaoh; and such as ministered not only to their bare wants, but even their capricious palate; He contrived with marvellous skill to concentrate within a tiny mouthful of Manna the full essence of everything grateful to the taste. Let therefore the man among you think again, who has got into his head the silly notion that, because God has in store for His servants in Paradise those torrents of the sweetest nectar, He, for this reason, keeps them alive in the earth with juices of the most bitter aconites. On the contrary, I tell you that here as well He affords them all manner of delights; howbeit in secret; *the hidden manna . . . . which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it.* (Rev. ii. 17.)

3. We have then to satisfy our minds on this point, whether these delights are really superior to those of the world, exactly as those experienced by the Israelites in the desert surpassed what the Egyptians enjoyed in the city. But of this you will soon be convinced by recollecting how the pleasures proper to spiritual persons differ in their quality from those proper to worldly persons: for, you know, in one case the pleasures appertain to the body; in the other, to the soul; and beyond question the latter infinitely excel the former. Were this the doctrine alone of some holy man, some over-zealous votary of religion, it might well be suspected as untrue, or at least exaggerated; but it is the saying even of Gentile writers, of a Plutarch, of a Plato, of an Aristotle, who, everybody knows, did not place human happiness

in the acts of the bodily senses, but in the rational operations of the mind.

It is not my intention to establish this truth by arguments, though I could produce them at great length and on the surest grounds: I would rather prove it solely from experience. Who has not frequently heard of that joyous festival, which the famous philosopher Archimedes celebrated, when, on getting into a bath, a certain mode of demonstration, though but in mechanics, which had long puzzled him, all at once, when he least expected, darted into his mind. It threw him into such a paroxysm of delight that he instantly jumped out of the water, like one crazed or in fits, set off running home, crying out at the full pitch of his voice, "*I have discovered it! I have discovered it!*" To such a degree was he carried away with feelings of self-gratulation, and transported beyond his senses, that he even quite forgot to put on any of his clothes. Plutarch after recounting this most singular incident goes on to say; "Now cite to me some Apicius (a man notorious for his gluttony) who, after having stuffed himself to the full with the most dainty and succulent viands, should rise with equal delight from table, and in a similar exuberance of joy go about crying out, 'I have devoured them! I have devoured them!'" . . . . We have no such record of any one, says that acute philosopher. "We have never heard that the most gluttonous epicure ever raised such a cry, though the class of men is now and always will be very numerous."

Who therefore does not see how much more intense the satisfactions of the mind are than the pleasures of the body? It is a most striking thought. But if the delight the soul takes in contemplating those truths, which are merely natural and mutable, so exceeds what is derived from all our other senses, what delight will it then take in contemplating truths, which are Divine and Eternal? Oh, who can describe the ineffable bliss of a pious soul in only thinking about God, in only knowing something about Him! Who can describe it? *Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!* (Ps. lxxxix. 16.) Far from perfection, as I am, I am unable to speak from experience; but a Bernard can testify to me; "That

indeed is the one true joy, which is derived, not from the creature, but from the Creator; which, when we possess it, none can take from us; in comparison with which, all pleasure elsewhere obtained is pain; all delight, sorrow; all sweetness, bitter; all beauty deformed; and whatever can delight, grievous." And does not GOD pre-eminently combine in Himself the excellencies of all creatures? Surely He does: for, otherwise, how could He impart to colours that loveliness, which ravishes the eye; to food that pleasantness, which stimulates the appetite; to sounds that melody, which fascinates the ear; to bodies that delicacy, which captivates the touch; to flowers that fragrance, which enamours the smell? And accordingly is it not evident that, while the soul has an inward fruition of GOD, it perfectly enjoys all those benefits, united in one object, which it would but imperfectly enjoy, as apart from GOD, in their several detached conditions; hence the delight becomes exquisite, in proportion to its being more condensed and concentrated. It may be that holy David had this very fact in his mind, when he thirsted so for the water-spring. *As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.* (Ps. xlii. 1, Vulg.) But how was this? If nothing better than a poor hart, oppressed with thirst, could he not have contented himself with rivers, or even rivulets, of water? Ah, no, my hearers, the delight is not here: to drink at the *fountain-head:* that is the true delight. Hence, whenever the Saints retired from the contemplation of the Divine glories, they did it with a feeling of reluctance, and dislike; nay, with such a thorough detestation of every other occupation—I speak not of acts sensual, but even of sensitive—that no refreshments of the body gave them any satisfaction whatever. . . . I am well aware that few among us are able to soar with them to such an elevation; but it does not follow from this that, if we will only go to such an overflowing *fountain,* we, too, may not hope to return with a supply of consolations, proportioned to the size of the vessel we bring with us: *Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it.* (Ps. lxxxi. 11.)

4. At all events, may we not hope to taste of that delight, which the profound peace, called peace of conscience, secures

to every mind truly spiritual? *The peace of God which passeth all understanding.* (Phil. iv. 7.) The man, that enjoys this peace—whom has he to envy? Let the wicked have as much, as they like, of their delusive pleasures: never will they enjoy a solid contentment, until they have obtained a quiet mind. But this quietness—how is it ever to be found among the wicked? We see that in the world nothing, so long as it continues in motion, ever enjoys quietness: it only enjoys it, when it has attained the end of its moving. Observe the rock: it only settles down, when it has rolled to the bottom. Observe the fire: it only reposes, when it ceases to mount aloft. And so in human affairs you observe, by way of example, that the physician never allows himself any rest, until to his patient he has restored health, which is the object of his labour, and consequently the terminus of his activity. Until his patient be perfectly cured, he is always in a fret and worry: he comes, and he comes again; he studies the case, he gives directions, he writes prescriptions; now he feels the pulse, now he looks at the tongue, now he notices the eye: he changes his medicine from day to day; he inquires how the patient has slept at night, how he has passed the day, whether he has taken his meals with an appetite and relish. But, when he has once effected a complete cure, Come, he says, now at last I can get a little rest; and, having said this, he pays no more visits, sends no more inquiries—simply because he has attained his end, the very thing he wanted.

Admitting all this, now attend to me. What, my brethren, is the end of man? Is it not happiness? Therefore man can never be quiet, until he has secured his happiness, and so reached his proper end. But how far astray from a happiness of this description do the wicked wander! *Every one hath erred in his own way.* (Isa. xlvii. 15, Vulg.) Happiness, by the unanimous consent of all wise men, can be found in God alone. And what are the wicked doing? Now they move in the direction of riches; and riches tell them, We are not man's happiness; because that is a good, desirable only as an end, whereas we are a good, desirable only, as a mean: go and inquire elsewhere, if you wish to be happy.

And so the wicked, finding no rest in their riches, move on towards honours; and honours tell them, We are not man's happiness; because that is a good beyond the reach of all change, and we are a good liable to numberless changes; go and inquire elsewhere, if you wish to live contented. And so the wicked, finding no rest in their honours, move on towards eating and drinking; and eating and drinking tell them, We are not man's happiness; because that is a good proper to man, and we are a good common to the very beasts: go and inquire elsewhere, if you wish to get comforted. And so, finding no rest in eating and drinking, they move towards games, they move towards concerts, they move towards theatres, they move towards races, they move towards making love; and from every quarter they get the same answer, because human happiness can never be found, except in a good, that is perfect, permanent, supreme, and universal—qualities that can meet in God alone. And now, what is the consequence? The consequence is, that sinners live in perpetual disquietude, because they continue in perpetual motion: for, instead of moving towards God, who is the end of man, they take the very opposite path, and now keep moving towards one creature, now towards another. *The wicked walk round about.* (Ps. xii. 9, Vulg.) So the Royal Prophet describes their condition. They are always on the whirl. But how different is it, dear Sirs, with the spiritually minded! They steer a straight course towards God, as the Prophet Isaiah said, *The way of the just is right, the path of the just is right to walk in.* (xxvi. 7, Vulg.) And therefore they alone obtain their rest, because they alone arrive at their proper end. And, although we can never in this life possess that end in perfection, and therefore can never be perfectly happy while here, still, if any person in this life has a share in that happiness, if any rejoice, if any feast in it, they are the righteous; they being the persons, who live nearest God. "A hymn to all His Saints"—and to whom besides?—"to the people approaching to Him." (Ps. cxlviii. Vulg. ad finem.)

5. It is all in vain that you weary yourselves with objecting that a spiritual life consists entirely of austerities, and of all

that is shocking and melancholy; for, so it may appear, but so it is not in reality: nor are your senses in this matter the faithful witnesses you take them to be. So far from it, know you what the fact is? What occurred to Moses? It is notorious that GOD appeared to this illustrious personage on the top of Mount Sinai, there with His own mouth to signify to him the Law he was to promulgate to His people. But how appalling was the semblance, with which He appeared to him! It looked as if the tempests, summoned from every quarter in the clouds above and the depths below, were all convened at a general muster upon that mountain. The battle-field was the air, which, to render the battle still more murderous, put the mid-day sun to shame by casting a thick nocturnal gloom; save when by fits from time to time a sort of light, resembling that of a blazing torch or fiery beacon, gleamed strangely around; but a light so terrific, that it made men desire the darkness, and endeared the night. On every side to the bellowing of the thunder responded the din of the trumpets in dreadful unison; and to the din of the trumpets responded the bellowing of the thunder. It was impossible to discover, whether these signs were an incentive to the battle; or, a signal for retreat. And, even to involve the scene in still wilder confusion, it was observed that the same instant that the lightnings flashed, the thunders rattled, and the same instant the thunders rattled, the lightnings flashed. The mountain was all in a smoke at those gashes and deep wounds, which the lightning had cut into its very entrails; and, while it stood belching out fire and brandishing flames, you would have believed that the Heaven itself was about to be consumed in one most disastrous conflagration.

Now just conceive, for the life of you, what must the people with such a spectacle before them have done; what they must have said. They stood all around the mountain in serried ranks, within the bounds GOD had assigned them; and they heard those rattlings, and they witnessed those contentions of the elements, and they knew well that Moses their leader was actually in the very thick of it all. What conclusion must they have come to about him? There were women,

there were young men, there were children, grouped here and there; and even the men, as being of dull comprehension, must probably have thought every moment would be the last for Moses. Ah, the woman yonder, on observing that stroke of lightning, must have said, This it is, that will at once strike him dead! Ah, rejoined another, observing the dart of that flame, This it is, that will in an instant devour him! And how is it possible, said others, as they talked together, that such volumes of smoke have not suffocated him? He was surely much too bold in venturing to go up so high. He might have been content, like other people, to stay below here at the foot of the mountain, and have excused himself to GOD for not having followed Him up to the summit. We may well suppose that the people in their fright whispered among themselves in this manner. And, in fact, I find that they, one and all, gave over Moses for dead, as he still delayed his return; and thereupon intreated Aaron to find them some other god, more peaceably and gently disposed, seeing that terrible GOD of theirs had killed their leader. "Thinking Moses was dead they went to Aaron, and asked him for some gods," so Tostatus expressed what happened. But Oh, dear Sirs, what a mistake they made! Not among the gardens of Alcinous, not beneath the shades of Thessalia, could any one have enjoyed delights at all to be compared with those, which Moses experienced within those inclosures of war, and in the midst of those volcanoes of fire. In the very centre of those convulsions he enjoyed sweet fellowship with GOD, and needing neither food nor repose he delectably spent his days and nights in contemplating the perfect beauty of His countenance; nor ever was there thunder to disturb his tranquillity, nor lightning to confound his sight, nor a single spark venturing to touch even the hem of his garment: so far from it, if we are to credit the opinion of the same Tostatus, the whole of this horrible exhibition was not a real battle, but a feigned encounter; for it was not true fire, nor true lightning, nor true terrors, that were seen.

Behold then here, dear brethren, the finest illustration we can possibly have of all I am anxious this morning to impress on your minds. The life of spiritual persons is here sha-

dowed forth to us by the phenomena of Mount Sinai; a mount of pleasure to those on its heights, a mount of fear to those, who see it from a distance. The dull-headed majority, who judge only from things that appear, commiserate the poor creatures, who must needs be mounting too high. It would be better, they say, to remain on the slopes of perfection, than to presume to reach its summit. What shall we find there, but conflicts between the flesh and the spirit, between appetite and reason? In the midst of such conflicts how is it possible to escape being sooner or later put to death? They apprehend that every exercise of repentance good men perform may turn out to be a fatal stroke, which, if it does not terminate, will, at least, shorten their life; and, just as the Hebrews once exclaimed, *Let not the Lord speak to us lest we die,* (Exod. xx. 19,) so say they, Let whosoever will be on close terms of intimacy with God; if we are to live in any peace, if we are not to die a violent death, let us remove further off from Him. *Let not the Lord speak to us lest we die;* no, *let not the Lord speak to us.* Ah! what speeches are these, as wicked, as they are false! Not only do the Moseses, who have interviews with God, not die, not only do they not suffer; but they inebriate their souls with a nectar so delicious, that they neither care for food nor sleep, and, passing days and nights in an endearing colloquy with God, inwardly smile at those apparent alarms, at which so many faces turn pale. *Great peace have they who love Thy law, and nothing shall offend them.* (Ps. cxix. 165.) No, there is *nothing to offend them,* as the people believe there is. And shall we not then be afraid to ascend the summit of this mountain, but with those dastards, shall we stand loitering a far way off? *Struck with fear they stood afar off.* (Exod. xx. 18, Vulg.) And shall we not learn to undeceive our imaginations? And shall we not overcome shadows? And shall we not fortify our minds? And shall we let ourselves be thus shamefully cowed by a phantom of hurricanes and tempests, which is all a mere nothing? Oh, what childishness! Oh, what feebleness of mind! Oh, what cowardice!

6. Seneca sat down one day to arm his mind deliberately

against death. And what was the argument, think you, he employed for this purpose? The very one we are now handling. He drew a picture before his eyes of death in its most awful and over-bearing figure, and drawing himself near to it, as we should say for a tête-à-tête, he began to address it. "Thy attempt to frighten me with these unreal appearances is useless. Why comest thou here with swords and chains? Why, with scourges and instruments of torture? It avails thee nothing to go about with this retinue of fierce executioners; some, bearing arrows; and some, chains; and some, pincers; and some, rakes; and some, clubs; and some, halters. 'Tis quite needless thy showing me in one place those smoking furnaces with a threat of reducing me to ashes, and in another place those yawning chasms with a make-believe of dashing me down headlong into them. Divest thyself of this frightful pageantry. I know thee, who thou art. Take away that pomp, under which thou dost lurk, and alarm fools. Thou art death, the same, whom a slave of mine, a mere menial handmaid, just now despised." What art thou but that same death, which my own poor slave has just encountered, and a common serving girl of my family has just combated? Lay aside all these contrivances for terrifying people. Silence this multitude of groans, of shrieks, of dismal lamentations. What harm, beyond a little pain, is it in thy power to inflict upon me? But I see that against pain a sick man fights, and overcomes it; against pain, a wounded man, and does not fear it; against pain, a man in a fever, and supports it. And why then should I be the only coward, because of a sense of pain, which may, I grant, be severe, but is still my last? Thus, dear Sirs, did a heathen nerve his mind, so as to despise the mightiest object of dread in the world, to despise death. And, in truth, by this train of thought he succeeded so far to despise it, that when its approach, by an order from his ungrateful pupil Nero, was intimated to him, his countenance did not alter, nor was he at all discomposed: instead of this, he himself was the person to console his friends, his domestics, his wife, in their sorrow for him: and, during his last moments, while the blood was actually streaming in torrents from his veins,

he exerted himself, while seated in the bath, in dictating to different scribes collected on the spot the most sublime precepts of morality,—that so he might breathe his last in the atmosphere of those very instructions of wisdom, which had been the guide of his life.

Now why do we not from so great a man learn a lesson of so great profit to our souls? Never mind his being a heathen; for it matters little what the character of the teacher is, provided his doctrine be useful. We feel—do we not?—an inward shrinking at the external look of a spiritual life, as it looms before us with a deadly apparatus of penitential austerities, mortifications, and hardships. Be it so. "Yet this we ought, above all, to remember—to divest things of the noise they make, and to see what each verily is. We shall find in them nothing terrible, but the fear they cause." And Oh, what is there in a spiritual life to alarm you? Is it perhaps the solitary retirement you may have to seek, far away from public amusements and the licentiousness of the age? But how many holy persons have submitted to a retirement like this, ay, for years and years! And if they could do so much, why can you do so little? . . . . We do not call upon you to renounce society altogether, but only what is frivolous, only what is disreputable. What, I repeat, is there to alarm you? Is it the serious application to prayer? But this is the very exercise, that many holy men have practised with cheerfulness almost the livelong day. Is it the duty of almsgiving? But this is what many Christians have performed with the utmost liberality, bestowing all their goods in charity . . . . It may be that works meet for repentance, as belonging to a spiritual life, frighten you, and you shrink back from them, in consideration of your weak constitution and delicate frame? But what have not tender females submitted to in this way? . . . .

It is useless then for a spiritual life to present itself under this repulsive aspect, with its accompaniment of all kinds of methods to grieve and torment us, both in mind, body, and estate. Let it at once lay every one of them aside. We know its true nature. "Let it take away that pomp under which it lurks, and alarms cowards." This

is the very same spiritual life, which so many and many have constantly practised. Our annals are full of such examples; they are famous everywhere. Every age, every station, every sex, every kingdom, every people, can boast of its numberless examples. And cannot we, too, be among them? What were they? Were they not formed of the same flesh, of the same materials, as we were? The consolations, with which they armed their minds against so much suffering, are prepared equally for us, if we only wish it. *Is it a great matter that God should comfort thee?* Job here pointedly asks me. (xv. 11, Vulg.) We also can enjoy the same delights, we also can hope for the same reward, we also can set to work animated with that same charity, which makes easy to every loving soul what every unloving soul finds so difficult. What therefore shall stop our mouths, and forbid our exclaiming, Farewell, thou world; farewell, ye pleasures; farewell, ye vanities; keep yourselves for such people, as are strangers to any superior happiness. We have no wish ever to live on terms of peace with our deceitful carnal lusts, which, while pretending to be our friends, rebel and act against us, as our most determined enemies. War, war, war against ourselves! This is our desire; but it is an expedient war, a just war, a pleasurable war. He must be indeed a simpleton, who thinks it a pleasant thing to fight in the pay of Satan, that enemy of our happiness; and at the same time holds it something quite intolerable to enlist under the standard of a God, who is so desirous of our being Blessed for ever.

The Second Part.

7. Here, then, brethren, we are come at last to our conclusion—I, to end my toil in preaching; you, your tedium in hearing. What now remains but for me humbly to implore your pardon for the little service I have done you in this pulpit, and for you in your kind feeling to consent to grant it . . . . Though deeply conscious of my inability and of the many defects, which have attended my Ministry among

you, I am comforted with the witness of my conscience that in all sincerity and all fervour of love I have wished to serve you; and, though myself a poor sinner compassed about with infirmities, yet I know that the Word of GOD, which I have humbly endeavoured to preach, is in itself full of power and able to save your souls. And never is its power more likely to be felt, than when it is preached in its simplicity: its mighty effects will then be seen in subduing the vices of the wicked, and in confirming the piety of the just. What account then, dear Sirs, can you render of yourselves? What fruit have you gathered from the many many Evangelical instructions, which CHRIST has given you in these discourses by the mouth of His unworthy Minister? What have you gained? How far have you profited? The majority among you, I am persuaded, will have been edified not a little, when they are observed to persevere in that uprightness of life, which disposed them from the first to become my hearers. To make their perseverance more easy, what more can I now say? Meditate frequently on the extreme shortness of this life, on the extreme uncertainty of the hour of your departure hence, on the extreme value of that reward in Heaven, which will crown your obedience. Yes, my dear Sirs, imprint deeply on your minds—and may it be a comfort to you!—this parting memento, such as it is, which I leave among you this day, as the last token of the affection I must for ever cherish towards you. It is, that you would always carry about with you through life an abiding sense of the exceeding graciousness of that LORD, whom you serve; *Truly God is loving unto such as be of a clean heart,* (Ps. lxxiii. 1;) so *loving*, that He will minutely record every service you do Him, every tear, every alms, every sigh, every prayer, every work of repentance; and for every victory, however comparatively insignificant, which for His sake you obtain over your sinful lusts, will admit you into a share of the same Glory He enjoys Himself; *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne.* (Rev. iii. 21.) And Oh, the satisfaction you will derive, when, at the close of your transient sufferings endured in this life for His sake, He will come at your dying hour to receive you unto Himself; for He will

then display before your eyes with an approving expression of His love all the good works you have performed—despised, as they may be, or totally forgotten on your part—He will show you how faithfully He has preserved the register of them all: and then conducting you to Paradise, amid the concert of the Blessed and the plaudits of the Angels, He will with His own hands dry your tears; so that henceforth there shall be for you no more groaning, no more mourning, no more infirmities; *there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain,* (Rev. xxi. 4;) but gladness Eternal, pleasures Eternal, life Eternal, health Eternal, beauty Eternal, treasures Eternal, beatitude Eternal. Oh, unbounded lovingkindness! Oh, love, that cannot be expressed! And who will not bestir himself gladly to persevere in the service of a Master, whose bounty is such, that He will most abundantly reward those actions, to which in strict justice we were obliged, as if they were freewill offerings of our own liberality? This, is what I would have you consider, O ye righteous.

8. But if some sinners should perchance have crept into your honourable assembly, like the poisonous plant among flowers, or like the rank weed among the corn, what for the last time am I to say to these unhappy persons? Ought I to denounce and reprove them for their incorrigible obstinacy, and put them to an open shame? Ah, not so. My only wish is to entreat them by the tender mercies of CHRIST not so far to undervalue their own souls, as, for the sake of some momentary pleasure, or for the sake of some uncertain gain, or for the sake of some unworthy affection, to consent to live every day in danger of everlasting condemnation. Let them rather pause, and only reflect, how dreadful they will experience those flames to be, that are devoid of all light, those nights without a morning, those groans without a relief, those tears without a consolation, those dungeons without an escape, those tortures without an end, those torturers without a heart to feel. But, if they care but little for their own souls, I entreat them to show, at least, some pity to that most Holy Blood, which was shed for them, to that Flesh, which was torn for them, to that Body, which was rent in pieces for their iniquities. Ah, my beloved sinners, now the

time is come that I should ease my soul from the burden of a tremendous emotion, which for a long time has been pent up within it. Hear therefore, now in this my last address, a brief but marvellous history.

A young lady of high character, exposed for a length of time to the importunities of an abandoned youth, tried every expedient to get rid of him. She used entreaties, she used warnings, she mingled threatenings. Everything she tried failing, she adopted a course, which from its extreme boldness was the less to have been expected of her. For, seeing the young man coming one day to her house quite unawares, and approaching her chamber, she turned deadly pale, as at the sight of a viper; and, in the consternation and hurry of her mind, not knowing how best to defend herself, she immediately seized a wooden Crucifix, that was hung up in her room, one of very large size and solemn appearance, and rushing quickly with it to the door she laid it down across the threshold. Then with eyes flashing indignation, a countenance full of alarm, and a voice powerful beyond her sex, "Come now," she exclaimed, "come, wicked man, and gratify your base desire. But look, see what you must pass, before you can reach me. You must pass over this Crucifix. If you have the heart to tread on His Body, then I consent to your profaning mine!" At this act and at these words the young libertine paused and stood still; whether as most confounded at the strangeness of the scene, or overwhelmed under a sense of shame, I cannot say. The colour of his cheeks changed rapidly. Prostrating himself before the Crucifix he declared what he felt, much more by his looks, than by anything he said. He melted into a flood of tears. He bewailed his desperate act. He invoked chastisement. He professed repentance.

Sinners dearly beloved, in the course of nearly forty sermons, I have used every expedient I could devise to induce you to forsake your sins. At one time I have convinced you by argument, at another I have exhorted you with authority: now I have encouraged you with examples, now I have terrified you with menaces, now I have allured you with promises. And now I pass from all these to supplicate and adjure you

on my bended knees at your feet. For, could I believe it possible to find any one in this Church, capable, notwithstanding all I have said, of designing on going hence to resume his same former bad habits of life, my duty, it seems, would lead me to resort this morning to some extreme remedy, as is done in extreme cases: and therefore I may dismiss every scruple from my mind, imitate the boldness of this young virgin, and lifting up this most sacred Crucifix go forward at once, and lay it down at the porch. Then, having first bolted every other door of the Church, and so prevented all other means of egress, I would from the same spot—all in fire, all in tears—cry mightily aloud—Now then, come! Why delay? Depart hence, ye wretched sinners: Depart, I say: for outside the Church your bad connections are anxiously expecting you. Depart; for your companions are there, inviting you to bring to a close those immoral stories. Depart; for your agents are there, inquiring for you, to complete those fraudulent contracts: but mind, if you wish to pass, this is your way. Do you see those limbs, so enfeebled? Do you observe those gashes, intrenched so deep? Upon them you must step; upon them you must tread with your feet. Why do you hesitate? This is the image of that same CHRIST, whom you took such a particular delight in publicly affronting. Lo! He lies extended before you. Degrade Him now at your pleasure. Bruise, crush Him, trample His honour in the dust. His hands are nailed down: don't apprehend, that He'll chastise you. His lips are silent: don't fear that He'll upbraid you. You may rather go merrily on your way; for He will abide unmoved, that He may suffer the punishment of your guilty indulgences. You will go, and will repose on your downy pillows; He will abide still to writhe on His bitter cross. You will go, and get flowers for your garland, and crowns for your heads; He will abide still to faint and languish under the piercing thorns. You will go, and spend your listless hours in pleasurable endearments; He will abide still to count those hours in the agonizing embraces of death. You may treat His afflicted body with any indignity you like, since, according to His own confession, He is become the scorn of all men, the butt of

every evil tongue, the spurning of every rude heel. *My enemies have trodden upon Me all the day long.* (Ps. lvi. 3, Vulg.)

Christian brethren, were I this morning, as my last expedient, to take this extraordinary method of dealing with you, were I to address you in a manner so utterly without a precedent, think you, that there would be one among you all, so audacious, as to accept my offer, and courageously to pass over this Crucifix, having the hardihood, for the alone sake of enjoying his sin, to trample upon CHRIST? And yet, Oh, ye Heavens, this is the very outrage He is constantly receiving at your hands, ye reckless sinners; for ye are they, of whom the Apostle spake; they, *who tread under foot the Son of God;* they, who *count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing;* they, who *do despite to the Spirit of grace.* Ye are they, who deliberately persist in your sins and wickednesses, who, after you have listened to all my instructions, *sin wilfully*—mark it well—who *sin wilfully after they have received the knowledge of the truth.* (Heb. x. 29, 26.)

9. But whither do I allow my feelings to transport me, as one, who quite forgets the place, where he is speaking? It is a joy for me to think that here there are no sinners, or such only, at all events, as are sinners now brought to repentance, who have cast down the weapons of their rebellion against GOD. In this case it belongs to Thee, O dearest Redeemer, to embrace them in the arms of Thy mercy, and, like a loving Father, tenderly to cherish such returning prodigals, to press them to Thy bosom, to let them behold Thy face, to let them receive Thy kiss of peace. If this in Thy sight seems asking too much, yet deny them not Thy Blessing. *Let Thy blessing be upon Thy people.* (Ps. iii. 9.) . . .

Command it plenteously to descend into all their hearts, as now duly qualified, we trust, to receive it—the Blessing of each of Thy hands, of the right and of the left, *of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth.* (Gen. xxvii. 28.) Bless their persons, Bless their dwelling-places, Bless their lands, Bless all their worldly substance. And let it be your care, my much respected hearers, peacefully to abide in that heart of JESUS, within which I now leave and deposit you. And may *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your*

hearts and minds (Phil. iv. 7,)—*your hearts,* so that you may never depart from what is good; *your understanding,* so that you may never swerve from what is true, as you have received it from my poor Ministry: *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.*

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